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THE LETTERS OF MADAME

VOL. I

1661—1708

“Clearly no one ever had richer matter with which to entertain her correspondents: she treats her relatives at all the Courts of Europe with everything, from State secrets to recipes for smelling salts.”

Manchester Guardian.

“A picture of the Court of Louis that can only be matched in the pages of Saint-Simon.”

J. B. PRIESTLEY in *The Spectator*.

“A very notable work”

The Bookman

THE LETTERS OF MADAME



— Gravé par C. Desrochers et tiré par J. B. de la rue St. Jacques au Moevenat

*Il est bon, puis qu'on voit mon visage et mes yeux
Que l'on apprenne aussy quel est mon caractère:
Quand il s'agit des intérêts de mon rang glorieux
J'ay l'âme délicate et quelques fois altière.
Et mon Cœur en revanche au foible, au malheureux
Ne se montre jamais que tendre, et de bonnaire.*

ELIZABETH CHARLOTTE,
PRINCESS PALATINE, DUCHESS OF ORLEANS,
called Madame.

THE LETTERS OF MADAME

*The correspondence of Elizabeth-Charlotte of Bavaria,
Princess Palatine, Duchess of Orleans, called
"Madame" at the Court of King Louis XIV*

VOLUME II : 1709-1722

Translated and Edited by
GERTRUDE SCOTT STEVENSON, M.A.

WITH 8 ILLUSTRATIONS



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INTRODUCTION

I

THE first volume of the *Letters of Madame*, which has already been published, covered the years 1661 to 1708. The present volume continues the intimate history of the French Court during the "*Grand Siècle*," as told in these letters, from 1709 up to the death of Madame in 1722. It also includes many anecdotes of earlier years which were recalled by Madame for Caroline, Princess of Wales, with whom she corresponded after Louis XIV.'s death. The letters are notable for their frankness, vivacity and first-hand knowledge, qualities which they possess because it was never intended by their author that they should be published, and because of the position of the author—the Duchess of Orleans, called "Madame" at Court, daughter of the Elector Palatine, wife of Philip, Duke of Orleans, the only brother of King Louis XIV., and mother of Philip, Duke of Orleans and Regent of France.

In the "Introduction" to the first volume the present writer has given some account of the life of Madame and of her character, which was honest, amiable, courageous and independent, as, indeed, the letters themselves show. The outstanding figure in the letters of the previous volume is King Louis XIV., who had a great regard for Madame, and who is depicted as a kindly and fair-minded man of the world, a devoted and frequently harassed father, rather than the traditional *Roi Soleil*. King Louis died in 1715, and in the present volume of letters the most prominent place is taken by Madame's son, Philip, Duke of Orleans, the famous Regent.

II

In 1711 Louis, the Grand Dauphin, died of smallpox at his house at Meudon, and from then until his own death in 1715, King Louis XIV. had to suffer bereavement after

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bereavement, until of all his posterity in the direct line there remained only his grandson, Philip V. of Spain, and a child great-grandson, who afterwards became Louis XV., "*le bien-aimé*." This delicate child was the sole heir to the throne of France in the direct line, since Philip V. had renounced all his rights of succession when he became King of Spain. The situation was complicated by the existence of the two legitimatised sons of the old King, the Duke of the Maine and the Count of Toulouse, upon whom Louis had bestowed the rank of Princes of the Blood with power of succession to the crown in case of the failure of the legitimate line. When it became evident that Louis XIV. had not much longer to live, the question of the Regency became a burning one in the secret cabals of the Court. The two candidates were Philip of Orleans and the Duke of the Maine. The Spanish Ambassador in Paris also intrigued in favour of Philip V., who would have liked to be appointed Regent, acting through a deputy. Of these candidates, the Duke of Orleans had obviously the best right to the Regency, but he had never been allowed any part in the King's councils, nor had he for years been permitted any power in the Army; so he had thrown himself into a life of self-indulgence, and kept away from Court. The Duke of the Maine, however, enjoyed his father's favour and confidence.

For five days the old King lay dying of gangrene. He kept his courage to the end, and, although in great pain, said good-bye to each member of his family and household and arranged his affairs as if it were merely a matter of going on a journey. To his little five-year-old successor he said: "My child, you are going to be a great King. Do not imitate me in my fondness for building and for war. Try, on the contrary, to live at peace with your neighbours. Render due homage to God, remember your duty to Him, and see that your subjects honour Him. Always be guided by good advice, and try to comfort your people, as I, alas! have not succeeded in doing. Never forget the gratitude you owe to Madame de Ventadour." He breathed his last at a quarter past eight o'clock the morning of September 1st, 1715. If he had lived three days longer he would have been seventy-seven years old.

Some days previously Louis sent for his nephew to say good-bye to him, and assured him that he would find that

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he had been treated justly, as befitted his rank, in his will ; but the Duke of Orleans had learned privately that the will, instead of naming him Regent of the young King, only appointed him head of a Council of Regency, and at the same time gave the control of the young King's person and the Household Troops into the hands of the Duke of the Maine. On the death of the King the Duke of Orleans immediately acted with a tactical skill that recalls his earlier success as a soldier. Knowing that the Premier President of Parliament was in the pay of the Duke of the Maine, he bought over the commander of the Household Troops in order to ensure the help of the Army, publicly paraded the English Ambassador to show that he would have English support, and laid his claims to the Regency before Parliament in a speech so impressive and conciliatory that Parliament set aside King Louis's will and appointed him Regent. He showed that he did not desire absolute power by appointing a Council of Regency and other committees to advise him in the government of the country. This Council of Regency included with but few exceptions the men that Louis had himself chosen, a fact which worried Madame and his friends more than it did the Regent, since—as Madame often complains in her letters—he took no care of his personal safety. He included, however, a few of his own friends, among whom were the Abbé Dubois and the Duke of Saint-Simon. Before, therefore, the King was actually in his grave his despised nephew found himself entrusted by the people of France with all the power he desired.

His first measures were popular. He began at once to cut down expenses in the Royal Household, and he released all the prisoners who had been consigned to the Bastille on *lettres de cachet* unless they had been proved guilty of some crime. Probably no ruler of a country ever set out on a more difficult road than the Duke of Orleans. His own past reputation as a profligate was against him, and he had been rendered odious to many people by accusations of poisoning, which were raised against him each time there was a death in the Royal Family. He had very powerful and unscrupulous enemies who did not hesitate even at attempts on his life, and ruthlessly blackened his character in the eyes of posterity as well as

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his own generation by their campaign of slander. His bitterest enemies were the families of Louis XIV.'s bastards, who for some years had enjoyed supreme favour. With them were Madame de Maintenon and a great many members of the "Old Court," and through them the Spanish Bourbon, Philip V., tried to retain control of the young King of France. Moreover, the people of France were poverty-stricken and depressed.

III

When the newly-appointed Regent came to look into the financial state of the country, he found France upon the brink of ruin. Royal extravagance, the endless succession of wars, and the peculations of statesmen and extortions of moneylenders, had increased the national debts to an enormous figure; the national revenue was steadily declining, while agriculture, commerce and industry, weighed down by taxation and drained of their life-blood by a host of usurers, had almost given up the struggle.

Appalled by this state of affairs, the Regent's financial advisers at first advocated a general bankruptcy. This expedient, however, found no favour with the Regent, and he was casting about for a solution of the problem, when John Law hastened to France to offer his services. Law was a Scotsman, the son of a prosperous goldsmith of Edinburgh, who had bought the estate of Lauriston, outside Edinburgh. As his father's business also included a certain amount of money-lending and banking, young Law grew up in an atmosphere of finance, for which he early showed a great interest and aptitude. In appearance he was handsome and his manners were not without charm. He was leading the idle, dissipated life of a young man of quality in London when he had the misfortune to kill a man in a duel. He was arrested and condemned to death, but managed to escape abroad. Later he was allowed to return to Scotland, and had already gained a reputation in financial matters, when in 1708 he came to the Court of France to urge plans for the replenishing of the coffers of Louis. At this time Louis was persuaded not to listen to him because he was not a Catholic, but he made the

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acquaintance of the Duke of Orleans and won his admiration and friendship. When, therefore, he again offered his services, the Duke, who had now become Regent, listened to him eagerly, and the two entered upon a stupendous system for the financial regeneration of France, at which they laboured disinterestedly and incessantly for the next five years.

Briefly, the situation, as Law saw it, was as follows : France had all the advantages necessary for great prosperity, in her climate, soil, geographical position, and the industrious character of her people ; but of late years she had, for a diversity of reasons, neglected the industry and trade upon which her wealth depended. To regenerate her industry and commerce, the first thing needed was money. In order to provide this money in sufficient quantity he proposed to establish a bank with the power of issuing notes, and to make this bank sufficiently powerful to fulfil its purpose the notes were to be secured on the King's credit. It would not be to the State's advantage to cheapen money beyond the positive needs of industry, so the notes would not, he thought, be over-issued. This check failed, however, in practice. Law convinced the Regent of the practicability of his proposal, but the Council of Finance distrusted it. They granted him permission, however, to establish a bank at his own risk, and it opened its doors in May, 1716. Success was great and instantaneous, and the Regent was soon able to extend the Bank's privileges, until in 1717 its notes were made legal tender for the payment of taxes, and all farmers of taxes were ordered to hand in their collections in notes.

A plentiful supply of money now having been provided, Law considered what else stood in the way of an industrial revival. He saw the enormous burden of taxation with which the Government oppressed the people. It was levied by a multitude of officials who helped themselves freely. There was also a large parasitic class of usurers, who battered on the needs of all classes. The working classes were impoverished and lacked employment. The colonies were almost forgotten, and trade with the East did not flourish. To cure all these evils, Law dreamt of a France united in one huge commercial undertaking, which would not only control her foreign trade but would reorganise her

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fiscal system and have a care for industry at home. In this idealistic scheme the Regent again supported him. An opportunity for laying the foundations of the company was made by taking over the monopoly of trade with the French colonies on the Mississippi, which then belonged to a rich merchant called Crozat, who was not making proper use of his privileges. Law took over Crozat's concession and formed a company to colonise and trade with all the vast and fertile region of America, which went by the name of Louisiana. This company was called the Company of the West, and was founded in August, 1717. Thus were brought into being the two component parts of Law's "System" for the economic revival of France, the Bank and the Company. Parliament was Law's determined enemy, but the Regent over-rode it, and by the end of 1718 the Bank had become a Royal Bank and its notes were legal tender. Branches were established in different towns, and the law enacted that all large payments must be made in gold or notes. So impressed was the Regent with the Bank that Law found himself in the dangerously exciting position of being able to create money practically at will, and from then on until the final crash the Bank's printing presses poured forth notes.

In the meantime the Company was throwing out its tentacles and grasping everything within reach. The State monopoly of the sale and manufacture of tobacco, the Company of Senegal, The East India Company and its subsidiary China Company, and the Company of Africa all fell into its maw. In 1719 the Company of the West became the Company of the Indies, and the next year it took over the two last independent commercial associations, the Company of San Domingo and the Guinea Company. It had also acquired the right of coinage for nine years, and secured the farming of indirect taxes—which had previously been held by a rival company calling itself the Anti-System—and of the general receipts from direct taxation. Thus the whole fiscal system of France fell into one central control. The rush for shares in the now all-powerful Company was phenomenal, and Madame has many stories to tell of this period. After decades of stringency and poverty, everybody began to gain ease and in many cases wealth. The Regent and Law became the idols of the nation. With the general

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prosperity, pleasure and amusement became the aim of Paris. Law saw the fulfilment of his dreams within reach. Taxation was simplified and lightened, the horde of battenning sub-farmers and officials was swept away, an impetus, however superficial and temporary it was to prove, had been given to commerce and industry, and the prosperity of France seemed assured.

Law now thought the moment opportune to tackle the question of the standing debt, and he proposed that the Company should lend the Government money to pay it off. The immense financial transactions which followed, and the placing of a very large number of new shares upon the market, led to a mad outburst of speculation such as had never been known before in France. Fortunes were made on all sides, and mobs of people, from the Princes of the Blood down to the lowest menials, besieged Law's headquarters in the Rue Quincampoix in the frenzied fight for shares. Law mounted from height to height of favour until, in March, 1720, he was made Superintendent of Finances. Fêted and fawned upon by princes and nobility, he had reached the climax of an amazing career. The end came quickly. The shares could not be maintained at their inflated value, and those who had not completely lost their heads began to sell as determinedly as they had bought, and to invest their money elsewhere. The Regent announced that the shares would be reduced by gradual steps to half their value, and a panic ensued. He immediately retracted the decree, but to no purpose. The credit of the bank-note was irretrievably lost, and no efforts of Law's could stave off for more than a few months the crash of both Bank and Company, and with them the System. Law courageously remained in Paris throughout 1720 trying to save his structure from complete ruin, but to no avail. In October the Bank was abolished, and Parliament resumed its functions. Law left the country in December. In taking leave of the Regent he said, according to Madame, "Sire, I have made great mistakes: that is because I am only human. You will find neither malice nor unscrupulousness in my conduct."

In the following spring the Company was deprived of its privileges and its creditors were compensated, but it managed to weather the storm and survived until 1769. The Bank,

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however, never recovered, and to mark its end the records were collected and publicly burnt. The results of Law's work for good and evil could not be thus easily effaced. Good results there were which persisted in some small degree. Commerce and industry had been given new life, and the revived interest in the colonies did not die out. The standing debt had been reduced and taxation simplified, but the immediate result was widespread ruin and reaction, and Law became as greatly hated as he had been adulated. The Regent shared fully in his ignominy. Paris vented its feelings in scurrilous songs and pamphlets, and every imaginary sort of vice was attributed to the butts of its animosity.

Law was no mere adventurer, but a financial genius who had too much of the gambler in his nature. His disinterestedness and integrity cannot be doubted, and he left France a poorer man than he entered it. There was, moreover, a humanity about his theories and a sympathy with the poorer classes which was foreign to the age in which he lived.

IV

The memoirs of the early eighteenth century abound in descriptions of the Regent, and from them and numerous portraits we can gain a good idea of his appearance and character, in both of which respects he strongly resembled his ancestor, Henry of Navarre. Of medium height, his figure was plump without being stout. He walked in a slovenly fashion, but danced beautifully. His hair was dark and his complexion ruddy. In repose or when smiling his broad, handsome face was charming, but, according to Madame, "he had a habit of making faces," which spoilt him. Madame, too, had no illusions about the character of her son. She writes in one of her letters: "The study of science suits my son very well. It is in keeping with his character, but when he tries to act the buffoon it is lamentable how badly it becomes him. The young people and even his daughter laugh at him on these occasions, but it does no good. The sort of thing must have happened to my son that we read of in the fairy tale, where the fairies are invited

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to the baptism of a child. One wishes that the baby may grow up beautiful ; another that he shall be eloquent ; the third that he shall be learned in all the arts ; the fourth that he shall excel in all manly exercises, such as fencing, riding, and dancing ; the fifth wishes him skill in the art of war ; the sixth that he may excel all his comrades in valour ; but the seventh fairy, whom they had forgotten to invite to the baptism, says, ' I cannot take away from this child any of the gifts that my sisters have given him, but I shall so oppose him all his life that the good gifts they have given him will be no good to him. For instance, I shall make him walk so badly that people will think him lame and hunch-backed. He shall grow a thick black beard and make such hideous faces that he will be an object of ridicule. I shall make him dislike all athletics, and I shall plant evil desires in his heart which will make him lose his taste for all the arts, music, painting and drawing. I shall give him a love of solitude and a horror of all good people, etc.' "

Of his intelligence there can be no doubt. His memory was extraordinarily good, and he was one of the most widely read men of his times. He enjoyed the society of learned men, and had many good friends among the savants of the times. Openly irreligious himself, he acknowledged the right of freedom of religious thought. In the wars against Italy and Spain he had shown himself a skilful and brave soldier, and in his dealings with the Council of Regency and Parliament he appears as a tactful and sagacious statesman. His gaiety and good humour were constant, and Madame relates how Saint-Simon, annoyed at his unfailing good humour, one day broke out with : " Ah, how good-natured you are ! Since Louis the Debonair, there has been no one so debonair as you." Hatred and revenge were entirely foreign to his nature, and he hated to punish or to cause sorrow, but when it was absolutely necessary he knew how to use severity. When it was suggested to him that it might bring him enemies to degrade the Duke of the Maine, he replied, " He is my brother-in-law, but I prefer an open to a concealed enemy," and proceeded with his measures. Madame was driven to exasperation by the patience with which he endured the constant fire of enmity and opposition from the party of the

"Old Court;" but when at last the evidence of his brother-in-law's complicity in Cellamare's plot was overwhelming, he clapped him and his recalcitrant Duchess into prison and thoroughly cleared out the conspirators' lairs. Of personal fear he had none. Madame writes: "My son is quite like King David. He has courage and wit. He is a musician, is little but brave, and adores women!" In a very much earlier letter, when the Regent was only thirteen, Madame wrote: "My son is already a man. A lady of quality has instructed him." His mistresses were mostly not of the noble classes, but from the opera or the *bourgeoisie*. He was liberal and kind to them, but pretended neither to be faithful nor attached, and he did not expect absolute fidelity, or show any jealousy of their other lovers. He refused to discuss anything serious with his mistresses, and though very indiscreet in talking to them of other people, he was discretion itself with regard to State affairs. One day, when Madame de Parabère—to whom he remained more faithful than to most—was trying to coax a secret out of him, he took her to a looking-glass and said: "Look there, and tell me if one could discuss affairs of State with such a pretty little face as that."

In her letters Madame mentions the Regent's notorious suppers. These suppers have come down to posterity as orgies of the worst description, and many lurid accounts of them have been written, describing the bacchanalian orgies in which the Regent and his friends of both sexes engaged, and at which the daughter of whom he was very fond frequently acted as hostess. The unembroidered truth, as far as can be ascertained, was that the Regent, after long days of hard work, during which he had drunk only a cup of chocolate, used to shut himself up to sup with his favourite companions, whom he nicknamed his *roués*, and the door was closed to the outside world, no strangers being permitted to enter. The names of the *roués* are known, and they were all men distinguished for their good fellowship and wit, far from being the drunken boors who would enjoy orgies such as the suppers were popularly supposed to be. Saint-Simon has left a scathing account of these entertainments, which were not even waited upon by servants, but he was never permitted to be present at one, and none of the habitual *roués* have written about what used to take

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place, so that all accounts must be based on gossip and imagination. It should be remembered, too, that the Regent never forgot his dignity as a prince, although he liked to mix in any company and was affable to everyone. He ate and drank enormously, but no one ever wheedled a State secret out of him, and he was ready the next day to begin his work at eight o'clock in the morning.

Despite the affairs of State, which kept him busy from morning until six o'clock at night, and his nightly carousals, the Regent found time to be a liberal patron of literature, art and science. He had always had a fondness for chemistry and had his own laboratory, where he worked in company with his physician Humbert. He even pried into the mysterious realms of alchemy and witchcraft. The Comte de Maurepas says of him: "The Duc d'Orleans had a penchant for the beautiful and all the arts, for science, mechanics and other studies, which he cultivated all his life in order to satisfy his tastes, and the result thereof was that he became the most amiable and versatile man of his times." The Regent, moreover, was himself a painter of some merit, and was a great lover of pictures, which he collected from wherever he could buy them, even from churches and abbeys. He was also fond of music, and composed an opera which was publicly performed, and he protected the theatre in every possible way. In the realm of literature he allowed Voltaire and Montesquieu to write with a freedom which would have meant the Bastille at least for them in the old King's reign.

V.

With his mother the Regent was always on the best of terms, calling on her daily and keeping her amused, as the following letter shows: "My son behaves very well to me. He treats me with great kindness, and would be very sorry to lose me. His visits do me more good than quinine, because they rejoice my heart without giving me pains in the stomach. He always has something funny to say to me and makes me laugh. He is very witty and expresses himself very well, and I should indeed be an unnatural mother if I did not love him with all my heart."

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With his wife the Regent did not get on so well. Madame writes : " My son visits his wife every day. If she is in a good temper he stays and chats with her for a long time, but if, as often happens, she is in a bad mood, he goes away without opening his mouth." The story of the marriage into which her son, then Duke of Chartres, was forced with Mademoiselle de Blois, legitimatised daughter of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan, was fully told by Madame in earlier letters in the first volume. She always detested the match, and foresaw its disastrous results on the lives of her son and more especially of his children, who were brought up without any care from their mother and inherited many of her faults. The Duchess of Orleans was a greedy and lazy woman, who was consumed with pride at having been born her father's daughter. Her health was indifferent, and she would lie for days at a time on a couch. She rarely made a public appearance, and preferred the company of her circle of intimates and her waiting women to holding a Court and receiving visitors. Madame, while insinuating that she was not guiltless of affairs of gallantry, was nevertheless grateful to her daughter-in-law for conducting them so discreetly that she was never the butt for scandal-mongers, as were some of her daughters.

The Regent had by his wife seven children, of whom all but one were daughters. They were : Louise-Elisabeth-Marie, Mademoiselle d'Orléans, who married the Duke of Berri, youngest grandson of Louis XIV. ; Louise-Adelaide, Mademoiselle de Chartres, who took the veil and became Abbess of Chelles ; Charlotte-Aglaré, Mademoiselle de Valois, afterwards Princess of Modena ; Louis, Duc de Chartres, the only son, who was born in 1703 ; then came Louise-Elisabeth, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who married the Prince of the Asturias and became Queen of Spain ; Philippine-Elisabeth, Mademoiselle de Beaujolais, who was betrothed to Don Carlos, second son of Philip V. of Spain ; Louise-Diane, who became Princesse de Conti.

There is much told about these princesses by their grandmother, especially about the Duchess of Berri, who was her father's favourite. At the age of ten she had a very serious illness, and her life was despaired of by the physicians. Her father, who had a very tender heart for all his family, was in great distress and watched over and nursed her with

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such devotion that she recovered. From this time his affection for her was so great that in later years it gave rise to abominable accusations. The debauched life that she, as well as her father, led, and their indifference to public opinion, did not tend to allay suspicions. To Madame fell the ungrateful task of lecturing her unruly grand-daughter and trying to keep her behaviour within reasonable bounds.

VI

After the death of King Louis XIV., Madame, who longed for peace and leisure to write her letters and live her own life, found herself again overwhelmed by the duties devolving upon her from the greatness of her position. She still held firmly aloof from any intervention in affairs of State, but she had to give up her own home at Saint-Cloud for months at a time and reside with her son at the Palais-Royal. The indifference and valetudinarianism of her daughter-in-law left her with more than her share of entertaining, and we read of her receiving many foreign visitors and carrying out public duties, such as laying foundation stones. In addition, she kept a grandmotherly, though often disapproving, eye upon the Regent's numerous progeny, both legitimate and legitimatised. Her life, too, became a perpetual torment of anxiety for her son, whom she saw surrounded by enemies, as was inevitable in his position. From Spain came attempts to brand him as an infamous monster who poisoned all who stood between him and the throne. From the Palace of Sceaux originated the atrocious libels which have done so much to blacken the Regent's character. These enemies did not hesitate at plots to assassinate him. The collapse of the Mississippi scheme and other financial projects brought further odium upon the Regent.

Madame at last began to know that her days were numbered. Her health, which had been robust all her life, began to fail. She found herself outliving her friends and relations, and her thoughts ran much on the days of her youth and her childhood's home at Heidelberg. She faced old age, as she had faced every other vicissitude, with courage. The end of her life was characteristic.

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Though heavy with dropsy and in very feeble health, she disdained to be left behind when the rest of the Royal Family and the Court went to Rheims for the coronation of the young King, whose safety and interests her son had so scrupulously protected during his Regency. To a friend she wrote that it would be as easy to die there as elsewhere. The long days of ceremonial and festivity wore her out, and she came home to the Palais-Royal on 3rd November, 1722, and there died on 8th December. She was buried without much ceremony at Saint-Denis, and Massillon preached her funeral sermon. The Regent and his sister, the Duchess of Lorraine, both showed great grief at her loss. The correspondents to whom she had written so diligently for many years were besought by the Regent to return her letters, and as many as were thus obtained were destroyed. Within a year the Duke of Orleans followed his mother to the grave.

CHAPTER I

1709-1711.

Gossip of the French Court.

7th February, 1709, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Duc de Bourgogne and the Duc de Berri¹ were brought up together in exactly the same manner, but their characters are quite different. The Duc de Berri is not in the least inclined to be religious and respects neither God nor man, nothing ever troubles him, and as long as he can amuse himself, in no matter what way, he is happy. Here is a list of his ordinary amusements ; hunting, card playing, flirting with silly girls, and feasting. That is the sort of life he enjoys. I forgot to tell you that he also likes skating. My son's tastes are quite different. He likes soldiering and is skilled in the arts of war. He does not care for hunting, shooting or gaming, but he has a taste for all the fine arts, especially painting, at which the painters themselves say that he is very promising. He is fond of conversation, and talks intelligently. He has studied much and knows a great deal because his memory is very good. He also loves music and women. With regard to the latter, I could wish that he didn't like them so much, because he is ruining both himself and his children ; besides, his fondness for them leads him into such debauched society that he is weaned away from everything good. You can tell therefore that he is quite a different character, but here he comes this moment. . . .

I cannot say outright that the King is married,² but

¹ Sons of the Grand Dauphin. The third son had become King of Spain in 1700, and had renounced all rights whatsoever to the French throne.

² To Madame de Maintenon.

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supposing he were, and that he wished to announce publicly his marriage, no one would say a word against it. The Dauphin is supposed to have made a marriage of a similar nature. The Duc de Bourgogne is too much frightened of the King and of Madame de Maintenon to dare to open his mouth. The aforesaid lady and the Duchesse de Bourgogne have only one mind in their two separate bodies. The Duc de Berri doesn't realise his importance and shuts his eyes to everything and condones it all, so you may be certain that the princes have done nothing to prevent the declaration being made. Those people who think they know all about the business state positively that it was the King's late confessor, Père de la Chaise, who was very much opposed to it. Time will reveal all. . . .

Madame and her puppies.

9th February, 1709, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

One of my little bitches has just jumped up on the table, seized my paper and torn a word, as you see. The lady who did this fine trick is called Candace or Robe, which latter name was given to her because her mother Charmille had her puppies on my robe. The Princess was with me, and we were seated on a sofa chatting together, when Charmille, who was behind me, began to whimper and fidget as she always did when she wanted to be caressed. The Princess said to me, "Your little dog is restless, what is the matter with her?" I said, "She wants me to stroke her." I put my hand behind me to pet her, and felt it all wet, she had just had her puppies on my gown, which was spread out all around me. The Princess had a good laugh at the affair, but this is ancient history and three years have gone since then.

Many persons have been frozen to death in the country, and bands of wolves are committing terrible ravages. They have devoured a courier from Alençon and his horse. . . .

LETTERS OF MADAME

Death of the Abbess of Maubuisson.

16th February, 1709.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have received the sad news that our aunt, Princesse Louise de Maubuisson,¹ has at length died after a long illness. She had reached an age beyond which it is difficult to go much further, because she was eighty-six years and nine months old. Nevertheless, her death has stricken me to the heart. The dear princess was fonder of me than of her other nieces, and I also fear that her death will upset our dear aunt, the Electress, very much, and that her health may suffer. . . .

Hard times in Paris.

2nd March, 1709.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Never in my life have I seen such miserable times. The common people are dying like flies. The mills have stopped working and many people have therefore died of hunger. Yesterday I was told a sad story about a woman who had stolen a loaf from a baker's shop in Paris. The baker wanted to have her arrested. She wept and said, "If you only knew my misery you would not take the bread away from me. I have three small children without any clothes, and they are crying for food. I couldn't endure it any longer, and that is why I stole this loaf." The magistrate before whom the woman was brought told her to take him to her home. He went thither with her and found three little children bundled up in rags sitting in a corner shivering with cold as if they had a fever. He asked the eldest, "Where is your father?" and the child replied, "He is behind the door." The magistrate went to see what the man was doing behind the door and fell back horror-stricken. The poor wretch had hanged himself in a fit of despair. Such things are happening every day.

¹ Louise Hollandine, Princess Palatine, and Abbess of Maubuisson, near Paris.

LETTERS OF MADAME

In a letter from Paris I was told of a girl who foretold the date of her own death, and who has also predicted that during this year there will be a great battle fought near Bethune, in which the French will be victorious, with the result that there will be a general peace.¹ It remains to be seen whether the prophecy will come true, but one thing is certain and that is that the girl herself died the day and the hour that she had foretold. They say also that there are to be found people amongst the savages of Canada who can foretell the future. Ten years ago a French gentleman who was once a page of the Maréchal d'Humières, and who married one of my ladies in waiting, brought back a savage with him to France. One day when they were seated at table this savage began to weep and make faces. Longueil (this was the gentleman's name) asked him what was the matter and whether he was ill. The savage only wept all the more bitterly. Longueil pressed him, and the savage said to him, "Do not force me to tell you what is the matter because it concerns you, not me." On being further urged he at length said, "I have just seen through the window that your brother has been murdered somewhere in Canada by such a person," and gave a name. Longueil began to laugh and said, "You have gone mad." The savage replied, "I am not mad at all. Put what I have said down in writing, and you will see whether I have been mistaken." Longueil wrote it down and six months later when the ships from Canada arrived he learnt that his brother's death had occurred at the exact moment and place which the savage had seen in the air outside the window. This story is quite true.

The wealth of the Clergy.

17th April, 1709, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have heard it said that the Clergy are going to give the King twenty-seven millions. The ecclesiastics in this country

¹ The battle of Malplaquet, fought in September, is counted as an English victory, although the allied forces lost twice as many men as the French. It was, however, the last great battle of the war, and peace was signed two years later.

LETTERS OF MADAME

are rich. The archbishop of Rheims alone has an income of sixty-five thousand livres, and there are many others who are worth as much.

The Duc d'Orleans.

18th April, 1709, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

My son seldom stays very long with me because he never sleeps three consecutive nights away from Paris, and while he is in attendance at the Court he has so much to do with the King and the ministers that he has hardly any time to devote to me. Thank heaven, he can reason things out intelligently. He knows about all the different religions, and I flatter myself that if he were to have the honour of conversing with you, he would not bore you, because he is not in the least pedantic. What would shock you about him is the way he carries himself, which is really disgraceful. He hangs his head and drags one leg and arm, nevertheless when he wants to he can hold himself better, and when he dances, for instance, he is a different man. . . .

The famine.

23rd May, 1709, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Would to God that I could say that we had no famine here, but it is unfortunately only too true. The fruit harvest would not matter if only we had enough bread and wine. Merciful God, what sad times these are !

King Louis sends his gold to the mint.

8th June, 1709, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am very glad for the sake of the poor inhabitants of the Palatinate that the elector has made up his mind to treat

his subjects better. When those who have gone to Pennsylvania hear about it they will quickly return. . . . I am very much neglected here because everyone whether young or old runs after the people who are in favour. The Maintenon woman cannot stand me, and the Duchesse de Bourgogne cares only for those liked by the former dame. I have done my best to conciliate that all-powerful personage but I have not succeeded, therefore I am shut out of everything and only see the King at supper time. I can do nothing except at the will of others. When Monsieur was alive I was freer. I dare not sleep a night outside Versailles without the King's permission, so I have good cause to wish that I were with you in our dear Palatinate, but God does not wish people to be completely happy here below. Amelia and you are free, but you have bad health, whilst I, who am left in loneliness have, thank God, perfect health. You are greatly mistaken when you think that no lamentations are heard here. Night and day we hear nothing else. The famine is so terrible that children have devoured each other. The King is determined to go on with the war, and yesterday replaced his golden service with one of porcelain, and he has sent everything golden he possesses to the Mint to be converted into *louis*.¹

The disgrace of Chamillard.

13th June, 1709, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Yes, the news is quite true that Monsieur Chamillard² has been dismissed and Monsieur Voisin, a councillor and intendant of Saint-Cyr, has taken his place. The latter has, however, to pay eight hundred thousand livres to Chamillard, to whom the King has also allotted a pension for life of twenty thousand crowns, half of which will be continued to his wife if she survive him. His son receives a pension of twelve thousand livres and buys from Monsieur de Cavois

¹ The silver had gone to the melting pot as long ago as in 1689, including Louis' silver furniture and his enormous throne of solid silver.

² Michel de Chamillard, Minister of Finance and War. His incapacity led to his dismissal.

the reversal of the appointment of grand marshal of the lodgings. Monsieur de Chamillard received the news of his disgrace with great dignity, and when the Ducs de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers made the announcement to him on behalf of the King, he said to them : " I myself have felt that the office was a burden too heavy for me to bear, and I have often said so to the King. I have done my best, and I hope with all my heart that my successor will do better than I have." Having spoken thus he sent for his carriage and drove to L'Etang, where he owns a beautiful house quite close to the park of Saint-Cloud. From thence he sent a messenger to Meudon to the Duc de la Feuillade, but not to his other son-in-law, the Duc de Lorges, because he thought that the former was fond of him, since he had always done everything he could to help him, whereas he had quarrelled with the latter about his daughter. Alas, the poor man found himself deceived in this as in many other matters. The Duc de la Feuillade, instead of coming to him, stayed on at Meudon, supped there with Monseigneur, passed the night unconcernedly there and joked all the evening about his father-in-law's disgrace. The next day he went to Versailles to beg the King to allow him to retain his lodgings there, and only turned up at his father-in-law's house in the afternoon.

The Duc de Lorges, on the contrary, to whom no message had been sent, and who only heard the news in a letter from his wife, drove off immediately in his carriage to L'Etang, where he said to his wife : " You have never lived happily with me and have caused your father to hate me to such an extent that he despises me and disparages me to everyone, and even in the height of his favour never did me a single good turn. This is the last time I shall reproach you thus, and it is for you to decide whether you will be happy from now on, because if your father's disgrace bring you to your senses and make you resolved to live amicably with me for the future, I am quite prepared to live happily with you. I have come here to place my houses, my property, my wealth, in fact everything I possess at his disposal." He went off to find Chamillard and said to him : " Sir, in order to prove to you that I am not so wicked as you have imagined I have come to offer you my house and all I have. If you wish me to stay with you, I shall stay ; if you do not wish

it I shall obey your will as an obedient son should. You have only to tell me what you desire because now that you are in trouble I have forgotten all the differences there have been between us. Your daughter will never again have to complain of any unkindness from me, provided that she will live at peace with me." You can imagine how much Monsieur de Chamillard, who is a kind and honourable man, was moved by this speech. He is going to live at his son-in-law's house. They say, too, that the only thing that makes him regret his misfortune is that he no longer has the privilege of seeing the King, to whom he owes such gratitude, and for whom he has a real affection. I do not know the true cause of his disgrace, but I will tell you what the public are saying about it. There are different versions. Some say that he couldn't account for twenty-three millions that have passed through his hands. He cannot have appropriated them, but may have given them to partisans, who fearing that things were on the verge of being discovered, plotted his disgrace and put one of their own creatures in his place. All they were concerned about was to prevent Monsieur de Chamillard from speaking to the King himself, because they are very sure that no one else would dare to lay the information before His Majesty. Other people attribute Chamillard's fall to the following cause: The Pope, fearing that he was in for a war with the Emperor, demanded arms from the King through the Nuncio, and the King refused them on the grounds that he had not arms enough in his arsenals for his own troops, but as soon as the Nuncio had returned to his own house in Paris, an unknown man called and asked to speak with him. The Nuncio received him, and the unknown said: "Sir, I am aware that the King has refused to give you arms, but if you are willing to sign for Madame de Chamillard and her daughters an engagement that the Pope will give them twenty thousand livres, you will have as many arms as you need or desire." The bargain was concluded and the Pope received the arms. He mentioned the matter to the Maréchal de Tessé, and the Nuncio, on his part, told Maréchal de Boufflers, and the two of them reported it to Madame de Maintenon in order that she might inform the King, which she did, with the result that Chamillard was dismissed. I have related the history of this affair to you in detail, because I know that you like to

know the truth about everything. I am very sorry about Monsieur Chamillard's disgrace, because he has always been very obliging to me, and has always done everything he could to please me, although I was out of favour, therefore I am much obliged to him.

A riot in Paris.

22nd August, 1709, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

When I was driving in my carriage through the Porte Saint-Honoré into Paris, I saw everyone running about with terrified looks, while many exclaimed, "Good God!" Every window was full of spectators, and there were even people on the roofs. All the shops and the doors of houses were shut, and the Palais-Royal itself was closed, and I could not imagine what it all meant. But as I was alighting from the coach in the inner courtyard, a woman who was unknown to me, came up and said, "Do you know, Madame, that there is a revolt in Paris which has been going on since four o'clock this morning?" I thought the woman was mad and began to laugh, whereat she said, "I am not crazy, Madame. What I have told you is quite true, so true indeed that already forty people have been killed." I asked my servants whether it was true, and they replied that it was only too true, and that that was the reason why they had shut the gates of the Palais-Royal. I asked them what the revolt was about, and this is the story they told me: There is some work going on at the Boulevard and Porte Saint-Martin, and each workman is given three *sols* and a little bread. This morning there were nearly two thousand workmen, but, without being detected, four thousand demanded bread and money with a great deal of noise. As the supplies gave out, a woman, who had made herself conspicuous by her insolent behaviour, was arrested and put in the pillory. Then the row began. Instead of the original four thousand, an additional six thousand arrived and the woman was rescued from the pillory. There were many servants who had been dismissed amongst these, and they began to shout, "Loot, let us loot," and they did in

fact rush for the bakers' shops which they pillaged. The soldiers of the guard were called out and ordered to shoot down the rioters, but when the mob saw that they were firing with powder only, and for the sole purpose of frightening them, they cried, "Let us attack them. They have no bullets." The soldiers were then obliged to knock some of them down. This went on from four o'clock in the morning until midday, when the Maréchal de Boufflers and the Duc de Grammont happened to drive past the scene of the riot. They alighted in the midst of a shower of stones, addressed the mob, threw them some money and promised to tell the King that they had been promised bread and money which had not been given to them. The revolt died down immediately, and the rioters threw their caps into the air crying, "Long live the King and bread!"

These Parisians, whose wrath dies so swiftly, are thoroughly good folk. Yesterday they were all at the market place and behaved in a very orderly manner, but they hate Madame de Maintenon just as much as they love the King and the Royal Family. I wanted a breath of fresh air for a moment, because it was very hot in my small low-ceilinged cabinet, but the moment I put my nose out of the window a great crowd collected and showered blessings upon me, then they began to talk about the dame in such a horrible manner that I was forced to come in and shut the window. None of my people dared to let themselves be seen because immediately anyone appeared at the window they began their abuse, saying quite bluntly that they would like to get hold of her to tear to pieces or burn her for a witch . . .

The Battle of Malplaquet.

14th September, 1709.

Four days ago we lost a battle near Mons.¹ The slaughter was terrible and the losses on both sides enormous. On all sides one sees nothing but tears and despairing faces. . . . I am afraid the affair of my treasurer cannot be settled without loss to myself, because the wretch has undoubtedly

¹ Malplaquet.

stolen more money than he possesses. My son never pays me what he ought to give me. His campaigns in Spain, where he was left without anything, and found himself obliged to pay everything with his own money, have absolutely ruined him. The amount he was forced to spend is dreadful, and the King never sent him a halfpenny ; journeys, campaigns, sieges, everything was at his own expense. Never in my life have I seen such an unhappy and poverty-stricken time as that in which we find ourselves at present. God grant that a favourable peace may change everything !

The Duchess de Bourgogne teases her husband.

19th January, 1710, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Probably you have heard how good the Duc de Bourgogne is, so sanctimonious that he cannot look at any woman but his wife. The latter wanted to tease him a little and told Madame de Vrillière one day to get into her bed. That evening she pretended to be very sleepy, and the Duke, delighted because his wife for once wanted to go to bed early and before him, undressed himself in a great hurry to go to bed too. When he came into his wife's room he asked, "Where is Madame ?" and she replied, "Here I am," as if she were in bed. He went quickly over to the bed, threw off his dressing-gown and jumped in. But hardly was he there before the Duchess approached and pretended to be angry. "Can it be possible," she said, "that I find you, who pretend to be a saint, in bed with one of the most beautiful ladies in the country ?" "What do you mean ?" he cried. "Look who is lying beside you," she replied. He bundled the lady out of bed without giving her time to put on her slippers by the bedside, and was seriously going to beat her with his own slippers, so that she had to flee with bare feet. He could not catch her, but he hurled all sorts of abuse after her. "Impudent hussy" was his mildest term. People tried to calm him down, but everyone was too helpless with laughter. At length, however, his rage subsided. A few days ago the Maréchale de Veuffre tried to

kiss him by force. He defended himself for a long time, and when he couldn't keep her off any longer stuck a large pin into her head with such force that she had to go to her room and betake herself to bed. Joseph himself didn't go as far as that.

Birth of Louis XV.

15th February, 1710, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have just returned from visiting the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who was delivered of a prince at eight o'clock this morning. He is to be called the Duc d'Anjou. . . .

When my son was little I never struck him, but I used to whip him so soundly that he still remembers it. Blows are dangerous.

How the Duc de Berri spent his days.

9th March, 1710, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

It is not to be wondered at that the Duc de Berri is childish, because he never speaks to anyone intelligent. Day and night he is to be found in the Duchesse de Bourgogne's rooms acting as a lackey to her ladies. One sends him to find a table, another to fetch her embroidery, a third has some other errand for him. He stands or sits on a little stool while the young ladies lounge around, informally clad, either in armchairs or on couches, or rather canopies. He is never to be seen talking to generals or scholars. He does nothing but play at shuttlecock in the ball-room, practise shooting, gorge himself with food and drink, wait on the ladies as I have already described, and play lansquenet and the coxcomb. Since that is how he spends his whole life, what chance has he to learn anything? He is greatly attracted by Madame la Duchesse,¹ and I imagine

¹ Louise-Françoise, Duchesse de Bourbon-Condé, daughter of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan, formerly called Mademoiselle de Nantes. Saint-Simon says of her: "In every way she was made to charm, and her graciousness, even in the smallest things, was unsurpassed."

that she would dearly love to catch him for one of her daughters, moreover, I wouldn't take my oath that such a thing doesn't happen. He knows so little what respect is due to him, that when he comes across anyone who treats him respectfully, he is vastly astonished, and at a loss how to comport himself, while he almost imagines that they are laughing at him. . . .

*Madame's grand-daughter is betrothed to the
Duc de Berri.*

5th June, 1710, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

On Monday the King took medicine. When I went to see him he said to me, "I thought you were looking very happy yesterday, Madame." I replied to him, "Sir, I had very good reason to be so, because my son had just been to speak to me on Your Majesty's behalf." "I am delighted," said the King, "to have done something to please you, Madame, and I hope that this marriage will bring us still closer together." I replied, "Nothing could increase the affection that my son and I have always had for Your Majesty. But certainly, if it were possible to increase it, this marriage would do so. It overwhelms us with pride and joy." The King replied, "Your pleasure touches me greatly, but do not speak of the matter for two or three days yet." As my ladies came into the room at that moment we changed the subject.

That evening after seven o'clock, when I had returned from my drive and was sitting by my window writing to the Queen of Spain and the Duchess of Savoy, I suddenly beheld the Duchesse de Bourgogne bounding into my room with her husband and all her ladies. She exclaimed, "We are bringing the Duc de Berri to see you, Madame, because the King has just announced publicly that he is going to marry Mademoiselle.¹ The King is coming to tell you himself,

¹ Louise-Elisabeth d'Orléans, the eldest and favourite daughter of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans.

and so is Monseigneur, but we have raced them." I said to the Duchesse de Bourgogne: "Now that I am permitted to speak of it, I wish to assure you, Madam, that I shall always be eternally grateful to you for all the trouble you have taken in the matter. I know, too," I said to the Duc de Bourgogne, "that you have always desired this marriage, and I thank you a thousand times." To the Duc de Berri I said, "Come and let me embrace you, because now you are more than ever what the Dauphiness used to call you, she used to call you my Berri, *Madame's Berri*." He remembered that well. I embraced him heartily, and he said to me, "I have only one request to make of you, Madame, and that is, that you will continue to show me the same friendship and kindness that you showed me all through my childhood, and that you will begin to give me good advice again." With a laugh I replied, "I expect it would be more like it if I were to ask your pardon for having so often importuned you, but I didn't offer you advice for my own pleasure, and if the Dauphiness had not ordered me to on her deathbed, I should not have done so. You are too old to be lectured now, and I shall not attempt it, but will content myself with expressing many good wishes for you and the Duchesse de Berri. You have a place in my heart and I love you tenderly, but I am too old to see you often, because I can be of no use to you. Be happy, gay and contented, and I shall rejoice in your happiness."

I had hardly finished speaking when the King arrived with the Dauphin. The interview with them passed off very well too. My son and Madame d'Orléans, who had not thought that the engagement would be declared so soon, had gone to Saint-Cloud to conceal their joy, which was inexpressible. I sent a courier post haste to Saint-Cloud, with my compliments in writing to Mademoiselle. You can imagine that my room was soon packed with all the great and small who were to be found at Marly. It did not empty again until supper time. The next day I went to thank Madame de Maintenon, because she had behaved very well in the matter. She was very gay that day and our conversation never flagged. I have been told that she was very well pleased with all I said to her. . . .

LETTERS OF MADAME

Marriage plans of Mademoiselle and the Duc de Berri.

5th July, 1710, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

This evening at five o'clock the contract will be signed in the King's Cabinet, and the marriage will take place at eleven o'clock in the morning without any pomp, but in the evening there will be a great reception and all the Royal Family will have supper with the King. . . .

This union is a more suitable one than that entered into by the Landgrave of Homberg, because in this case the husband is nine years older than the wife, which is better than when the wife is older than the husband. The story was told me that at Metz, in the Reformed Church, an old woman presented herself one day to have her marriage consecrated, and the husband looked so young that the minister asked, "Do you bring this child to be baptised?" . . . I should like to go on gossiping with you, but I have already filled twenty-one sheets to my aunt.

The Duchesse de Berri and her grandmother.

7th September, 1710, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Duchesse de Berri often comes to visit me because the King and her father desire her to do so, but to tell the truth, she has no great love for me. Only those who are in favour are respected here. The Duchesse de Berri is intelligent, that cannot be denied, but I am very frank, and it is impossible for me to praise what I do not like, especially in those I love and who belong to me. There are, unfortunately, often happenings of which I do not approve, and I am, moreover, too old to become hypocritical, so people must take me as they find me. I am glad that she is Duchesse de Berri, and I wish her every happiness, but I do not expect any great affection from her in return. . . .

I am not surprised that the Pope is trying to defend the action of Cardinal de Bouillon. If our King had been prospering the Pope would have approved of all he does to

LETTERS OF MADAME

the Cardinal, but since it is the Emperor who is on top, our King's action towards the Cardinal is bound to be wrong in the Pope's eyes.

The English in Hanover.

6th October, 1710, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Like you, I cannot imagine how people can re-marry. I can only understand one motive for doing so, and that would be if one were dying of hunger and saw a chance by so doing of procuring a loaf of bread. . . .

Hanover seems to have become a little England since it is so full of English who are settling there. My aunt wrote to me about the handsome Englishman of whom you speak, but the gentleman must have been very badly brought up to want to sit down in the presence of the Electress. A Frenchman wouldn't have behaved worse, and they have begun to seat themselves everywhere these days.

The Duc d'Orléans dislocates his shoulder.

6th November, 1710.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The day before yesterday I had the worst fright I have ever had in my life. Let me tell you about it in a few words, my dear Louisa. Last Wednesday we had all been to celebrate the feast of Saint-Honoré, and had already taken one stag and were chasing another, when I saw someone fall from his horse. I thought at first that it was the huntsman who was with us, and I could see that he was badly hurt because he could hardly get up. When he did manage to and I could see his face I saw that it was my son. Just imagine what a shock it gave me! I took him into my carriage, but he was in great agony and we could not tell whether the arm was broken or dislocated. It turned out to be only dislocated, but it was near the shoulder where

my son has been twice wounded and some of the nerves are cut, and that is why he suffered such a lot. They put his arm back and he felt no more pain. Then they bled him and he is now quite better. He does not keep to his room but has his arm in a sling and goes about everywhere. Only half an hour ago he was sitting here beside me.

CHAPTER II

1711-1712.

A wife who was not pretty.

11th January, 1711, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Duc de Berri is very much in love with his wife, who is not at all pretty. For this reason I am afraid that his love may not last long. I am greatly afraid that she will be unhappy. . . .

I don't know whether it was the fault of King Charles¹ or not that so much harm was done to Madrid and Toledo, but in any case it will do him no good.

The War of the Spanish Succession begins to flag.

15th January, 1711, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The many disasters which are befalling the army of King Charles in Spain prove that I was not mistaken when I said that our King Philip is liked there, while the other is hated. Comte Starenberg, who was successful on his wing, thought for several hours that he had won the battle, and sent a courier to take the news to King Charles, but some hours afterwards he saw the enemy approaching, and at dawn he learnt that the whole of the left wing and the body of his army had been defeated, so he had to flee. He is still being pursued, but it is not thought likely that he will be caught. There is a turn in all affairs. . . .

¹ The second son of the Emperor, who claimed the throne of Spain under the name of Charles I.

The dangers of coffee drinking.

5th February, 1711, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am sorry to hear that you have become addicted to coffee. Nothing in the world is more unhealthy. Every day I come across people who have had to give it up because of the serious illnesses it causes. The Princesse de Hanau, daughter of Duc Christian de Birkenfelt, died of it after horrible suffering. It was found after her death that the coffee had caused hundred of little ulcers in her stomach.

Let that be a lesson to you.

Madame sleeps during sermons.

14th April, 1711, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am unworthy of having good sermons to listen to, because I cannot help going to sleep during them. The preacher's tone of voice sends me to sleep immediately.

Death of the Grand Dauphin.

16th April, 1711, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I must tell you into what terrible affliction the whole of France and we ourselves have been plunged by the totally unexpected death of the Dauphin. I told you already last Sunday that he had smallpox, but that the disease was running its course well, and that it was confidently hoped to save him. This hope continued until Tuesday morning. The people of Paris are very fond of the Dauphin, and they sent a deputation of fishwives to him, who embraced him and told him that they wished to have a *Te Deum* sung. Monseigneur replied: "It is too soon yet, wait until I am quite better." The same day I went to Meudon to congratulate the King because the Dauphin was getting on so well. I arrived at five o'clock, and as I knew that the King

was at the Council meeting, I walked about until it was finished, when I went to find the King who received me very graciously. He was in a very good humour, and reproved me for having grumbled so much when I had smallpox, saying that the Dauphin didn't feel at all ill. I replied that that was still to come, as the spots had to inflame and would be painful. At six o'clock, just as I was preparing to leave, a message came that the Dauphin was not so comfortable and that his head was very swollen. Everybody thought that the suppuration had begun, and regarded it as a good sign. On my return to Versailles, I received a visit from the whole English Court. They left for Saint-Germain at eight o'clock. At nine o'clock a message came that all was going well, but at ten o'clock they wrote that the Dauphin was beginning to feel restless and that his face was so swollen as to be unrecognisable. They added that the disease was concentrating on the eyes. There seemed nothing to be alarmed about in that, and I supped as usual at ten o'clock. At eleven I undressed and chatted for a moment or two longer with the Maréchale de Clerembault. I was on the point of saying my prayers and getting into bed, when, at midnight, I was astonished to see the Maréchale come back in a terrible state of agitation. She told me that the Dauphin was dying, that the King was just arriving at Marly from Versailles, and that the Duchesse de Bourgogne had sent for her carriage to follow the King. A moment later a message was brought that all was over and that the Dauphin had departed this life.

You can imagine the horror produced by this news. I also sent for my carriage, put on my clothes again as quickly as possible and went straight to the Duchesse de Bourgogne's lodging, where a harrowing sight met my eyes. I found the Duc and Duchesse dazed, pale as death and unable to utter a single word. The Duc and Duchesse de Berri had thrown themselves on the floor and, with elbows supported on a couch, were weeping so that they could be heard three rooms away. My son and Madame d'Orléans were weeping silently and doing their best to quiet the Duc and Duchesse de Berri. All the ladies seated on the floor round the Duchesse de Bourgogne wept with her. I assisted the Duc and Duchesse de Berri to their apartment and they went to bed, but did not cease their lamenting. As I went out

the Duchesse de Bourgogne told me that the King had forbidden anyone to leave that night for Marly, and that they were going the next morning. It was three o'clock when I re-entered my chamber and put myself to bed, but I only slept from five to six o'clock. At seven I arose, dressed myself and left at half-past eight. The weather did not reflect our feelings because it was the most beautiful day possible.

Everything was still shut up in the King's apartment when I arrived. I went to see Madame de Maintenon, who told me everything that had happened. She said that at ten o'clock they still had hope, but at half-past eleven death appeared to be imminent and they sent for Extreme Unction. The King was at dessert when they brought the message. You can easily imagine what a shock the news gave him. He wanted to go immediately to the Dauphin's room, but they kept him back saying that he would only arrive in time to see him die. The King sent forthwith for his carriage, but before he had entered, with Madame de Maintenon, Madame la Duchesse and the Princesse de Conti, the poor Dauphin had given up the ghost. Immediately after death the corpse turned black, which shows that the purple fever was present as well as smallpox. All the disease had stayed in his head, and he had hardly any spots on his body. His nose was covered with them, and the truth is he was suffocated. His corpse began immediately to spread such infection that it was considered necessary to take it straight away to Saint-Denis without any ceremony.

I saw the King at eleven o'clock. He is in such deep sorrow that his plight would melt a rock. Nevertheless he does not spare himself. He speaks to everyone with resigned sadness and gives his orders with great firmness, but every moment tears rise to his eyes and he chokes back his sobs. I am terribly afraid that he may fall ill himself, because he looks very bad. I pity him from the bottom of my heart. The people who thought they were doing me a great injury in estranging me from the Dauphin have perhaps saved my life, because if we had been still on the same terms as we were before the death of Monsieur, I might have fallen ill with grief and might even have died of it or at least remained inconsolable. But now I can bear this misfortune with equanimity, and am only troubled on the King's account.

Of course I am sorry about the Dauphin, but I cannot deplore the loss of a person who did not care for me and entirely forsook me, as much as I should have done had he remained a constant friend.

It can be seen at once on what footing the new Dauphin, the ex-Duc de Bourgogne will be. He will not bear merely the title of Monseigneur as his father did. In speaking to him he will be addressed as Monsieur, and in speaking of him he will be called Monsieur le Dauphin, but in writing to him the letter should be addressed to Monseigneur. . . .

Intrigues frustrated by the Dauphin's death.

18th April, 1711, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Paris and the Provinces are in despair about the Dauphin. It must indeed have been a terrible poison which killed the poor prince, because I was told yesterday that after his death a black vapour was seen to rise from his mouth, and his face turned as black as pitch and remained that colour. . . . What intrigues and plots have been made in anticipation of the time when the Dauphin would be king. Madame la Duchesse seems to have threatened to make the Duchesse de Bourgogne smart for the marriage of my granddaughter, the Duchesse de Berri, but her reign is ended now. Except for going in the evening into the King's cabinet, she has no more privileges than I have, who have never mixed in any intrigue. This persuades me more than ever that I must lean upon God, worry about nothing, and shun all cabals and intrigues as I have done hitherto. . . .

The Grand Dauphin's mistress and his daughter.

9th May, 1711.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You are quite right when you say that the King has great reason to mourn the loss of the Dauphin. His behaviour to the King was perfect. No son was ever more obedient, respectful and affectionate to his father than was



LOUIS XIV.

the Dauphin. For that he must be given due credit, but it is also the best that can be said of him. . . . The late Dauphin never thought he was so well as the doctors said, because he told Madame la Duchesse who has since repeated it to me, "This is a terrible disease for a man of fifty years, and I do not believe I shall come out of it very well." Madame la Duchesse cannot console herself at all, no more can the Princesse de Conti. Mademoiselle Choin¹ is very much upset. The King is giving her a pension of twelve thousand francs, and she will live at her house in Paris. The Dauphin has a bastard by the actress whom he has not recognised. She is now a girl of seventeen or eighteen years, with the face and figure of an angel. She is quite desperate. She calls herself Mademoiselle de Fleury after a village of that name in the park at Meudon. Heaven knows what will become of her! There is no great liking between the present Dauphin and myself, but he behaves politely towards me, and that is all I ask of him. His wife too is more polite than she used to be. If she continues thus, I shall be quite content. I must do her this justice, that since the marriage of the Duc de Berri she has changed greatly for the better. She lives happily with her husband now. That good prince is not so much ugly as badly built. He limps and is crooked-backed, but his face is not ugly. He has beautiful intelligent eyes and lovely hair. He is, to be sure, a little too narrow-minded, but at least he does not preach. . . .

An echo of the controversy between Fénelon and Bossuet.

5th July, 1711.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

. . . . I do not know what sort of madness makes people persecute the Jansenists. Many good and honourable people have fallen into disgrace through this. Monsieur de Cambrai² was not accused of being a Jansenist but a Quietist. As far as I am concerned, I always looked upon him as a good and clever man. In person he is ugly. He is nothing

¹ The Dauphin's mistress.

² Fénelon. The story of the controversy in which he, Madame Guyon and Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, were involved was fully told by Madame in earlier letters.

but skin and bone and has very sunken eyes, but his conversation is pleasant. He is very vivacious, courteous and even gay, and laughs and talks freely. In short he appealed to me very strongly. One never hears Madame Guyon mentioned any more. I have never seen her, but from what I am told she appears to be quite charming. At Court no one believes that the Bishop of Cambrai was sent into retirement because of his religious principles, but rather because he encouraged the King in his belief that there was no sin in concealing his unsuitable marriage. There are some whom he did not please by this attitude. For this reason, the affair of Madame Guyon was used as a pretext, and the late Bishop of Meaux was encouraged to oust him. . . .

The Duchesse de Berri receives a scolding.

14th October, 1711, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Last Tuesday I went to visit the all-powerful Maintenon. She requested me to send my ladies into another room, and began to address me with such an air of severity that my heart thumped. I thought I was in for a lecture. However, I hastily examined my conscience and found myself guiltless. She told me that the King had recommended my son and his wife to keep an eye on their daughter's behaviour, and that he had only refrained from speaking to me about it because he was so sure that I would, of my own accord, do all that I reasonably could. But, having discovered that since he had imposed this task upon the father and the mother I had stopped saying anything to the girl, he had ordered her, Madame de Maintenon, to request me on his behalf to read the young woman a lecture. All the points on which I was to scold her were then enumerated. I said that although I found lecturing people very disagreeable, still I would undertake the task in order to show his Majesty that I always wished to obey him whatever his commands might be. At the same time I begged his Majesty to let the Duchesse de Berri know that it was he who had imposed this duty upon me, so that my words might make more impression upon her. The King did so.

LETTERS OF MADAME

That evening the father, mother and daughter came to visit me, and I set to work at once. "My dear child," I said to the Duchess, "you yourself are well aware that since your marriage I have only reprimanded you once. I never intended to do so again, but to-day I have received a command from the King, which, as you know, I cannot refuse to obey. He has ordered me to tell you why he did not take you with him in his carriage to the chase last Monday. It was because your whole conduct is displeasing to him." I then dwelt on each point in order to show her that if she wished to be perfectly miserable she had only to continue as she was doing, but if, on the other hand, she wanted to be happy, she must begin to make herself as well liked by everyone as she had up to now made herself despised. Then when the King saw that she had completely changed her behaviour, he would certainly show her favour again. "So cheer up," I said to her, "consider what you can do to improve yourself and do it. In that way you will make both yourself and us happy." I said a great many more things that it would take too long to tell you. She wept copiously, and promised to turn over a new leaf.

A play upon words.

22nd November, 1711, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

. . . . The gentlemen of the Academy, for all their lively promises, are slow to perform. It is often told against them that when they were compiling their dictionary they spent twenty years over the letter Q. This, to be sure, sounds much funnier in French when they say, "*Messieurs de l'accademie pour faire leurs dictionnaire estoit demeurees 20 ans sur le Q.*"

CHAPTER III

1712-1713.

Madame scolds her grand-daughter by the King's command.

14th January, 1712, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Heavens, what a tribulation stubborn children are ! Last Monday I spent the entire morning scolding the Duchesse de Berri and telling her that she ought to beg the King's forgiveness. At the end of it she said to me, " My memory will be very bad, Madame, if I do not remember what you have said to me." My son, contrary to his usual custom, also exhorted her as fervently as he was able, so that we hoped that all would go off well and that the King would be satisfied with her. Her mother had already begged the King on Monday graciously to permit her to see him, he having forbidden her, through me, to enter his presence again until further orders. My son also interceded for her, but the King told him that he would do nothing further in the matter without consulting me first. That evening, as I was following the King into his cabinet, I saw that he looked quite embarrassed, and I said laughingly, " Your Majesty need not be annoyed at seeing me in this cabinet against your wishes, because I shall leave it as soon as I have had the honour of speaking to you, and what I have to say will not take long. I beg, you, therefore, sir, not to be annoyed with me, for I never intentionally do anything which will displease you. The reason I have followed you into your cabinet without having been commanded by Your Majesty to do so is that my son and Madame d'Orléans have told me that you will only allow the Duchesse de Berri to appear before you and beg Your Majesty's pardon when I have added my entreaties to theirs, and that is all I have come here for." . . . The King made no reply to the

first part of my speech, but referring to the latter part he exclaimed, "What, Madame, do you advise me to receive Madame de Berri again so soon?" I replied with a laugh, "As for advice, it would ill become me ever to offer advice to Your Majesty, but I do beseech you to grant this consolation to the Duchesse de Berri, as I assure you she feels very much humiliated. The King replied very politely, "You have such good sense that your advice is always good, and I will receive Madame de Berri again to-morrow evening. You may tell her so yourself or send her a message." I made a deep reverence, put my hand on the door handle, and said, "I will not reply to Your Majesty in the manner it behoves me to, lest I keep you longer from the company which awaits you," and I retired forthwith.

On Tuesday evening the Duchesse de Berri went to visit Madame de Maintenon, but did not say a single word to her, although I had expressly bidden my grand-daughter to begin by saying that she would like to meet the King in her room because she hoped that Madame de Maintenon would be kind enough to help her to conciliate the King. Instead of speaking thus she never opened her mouth to speak either to her or to the King, and never stopped weeping from beginning to end, so that the King was constrained to say to her, "It is evident that I must be the one to break the ice." According to the account which the King very kindly gave me afterwards, everything passed off very frigidly, at which you will not be surprised.

Madame's family give her more trouble.

21st January, 1712, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

So many disagreeable things have been happening to me that I have not been able to find a moment in which to write to you. An accursed chambermaid of whom Madame de Berri has made a favourite has been at pains to embroil my son with his wife, and Madame de Berri with her mother, who, being quite rightly annoyed, took her grievances to the King. The chambermaid was dismissed. I was mixed up in all this because the King had ordered me to scold

Madame de Berri if she did not behave discreetly. You may be sure that I did all I could to smooth things over, but it gave me a lot of trouble. Good Lord, am I never to talk of anything all my life but disagreeable things, never of anything which gives me pleasure? But there, that may lead me to say too much.

Queen Anne and the Duke of Marlborough.

4th February, 1712, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

That the Queen of England¹ hates the Duke of Marlborough and his wife is not surprising, because they have been very insolent to her. But all the same I think that the Queen ought to pardon Marlborough, because he did his duty to the army if anything too well, in battles as well as sieges, and in my opinion victors deserve thanks rather than reproaches. If, however, the Queen really has proof, as they say she has, that he wished to dethrone her and make himself a Protector like Cromwell, then she would be perfectly justified in taking him by the collar and arresting him, since they say he is practically a Protector already.

I don't think that the Harleys are any relation of those here, because I have never heard of any member of this family having been abroad. Very few French people care a scrap about ancestry, but money is respected by everyone.

Death of the Duchesse de Bourgogne.

14th February, 1712.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

In very truth no one can be sure of anything! Who would not have counted on the happiness of the Dauphiness²

¹ Queen Anne.

² Marie-Adelaide of Savoy, daughter of Madame's stepdaughter Anne-Marie d'Orléans, Duchess of Savoy. She came to France at the age of eleven to marry the Duc de Bourgogne, and was twenty-seven years of age when she died.

—and now it is all over. Merciful God, what an affliction for the poor Duchess of Savoy! I pity her from the bottom of my heart, and I cannot bear to think of all she will have to suffer. The Dauphin is very much upset, but he is young and can re-marry and replace her whom he has lost, but for the Duchess of Savoy the loss is irreparable. So it is too for our King, because he had brought up the Dauphiness to suit himself, and she was his greatest comfort, his only joy. She was so light-hearted that she never was at a loss to find some way of distracting him, however sad he might be. She ran in and out a hundred times a day, and each time she had something funny to tell. The King will miss her everywhere, and it is not to be wondered at that her death has sorely afflicted him.

Death of the Duc de Bourgogne.

18th February, 1712.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I hoped to have nothing mournful to write about to-day except the sad ceremony in which I had to take part yesterday at Versailles, but sorrow has overwhelmed us anew. The poor Dauphin has followed his wife to the grave. He died this morning at half-past eight. You can imagine in what a terrible state of desolation we all are here. The King's grief is so dreadful that I fear for his health. The loss to the whole kingdom is very great, because the Prince was very good, just and sensible. Everyone here is touched by his death, and I am stricken to the heart. Except God, I have no one to whom I can look for comfort but you.

The King had a very bad cold, so they did not rouse him, but on his awakening he was told the terrible news, and as soon as we knew that it had been broken to him, we all hurried to him. The sight was a truly harrowing one. The King sustains a great loss in this prince's death, because since his father's death his Majesty had ordered him to be present at all the meetings of Council, and the ministers worked with him. He relieved the King as much as he could, and was sympathetic and charitable. He had sold all his

mother's jewels to give help to poor wounded officers, and in all his life he never harmed a single person. I don't think the world has ever seen what we are now about to see, the bodies of husband and wife taken to Saint-Denis¹ in the same carriage. I am still so upset that I cannot control myself, and I hardly know what I am saying. You who have such a kind heart will surely pity me because the sorrow here passes all description. It is plain to me, that we all, whatever our station here below, must die in our turn. . . .

The Duc d'Orléans is suspected of poisoning.

20th February, 1712, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

To-day is not the day for the post, but my heart is so heavy and sad these days that I know of no better way of obtaining comfort than to pour out my misery to my beloved aunt. As if I were not sufficiently afflicted by the deaths of the Dauphin and Dauphiness, who for the past two years have given me many reasons to be pleased with them, something else must happen which touches me more closely and breaks my heart. Some wicked people have spread a rumour throughout the whole of Paris that my son has poisoned the Dauphin and Dauphiness. I, who would let myself be burnt at the stake to testify to his innocence, looked upon the rumour at first as mere folly. I didn't think it possible that anyone could say such a thing in earnest, but it was reported to the King in all seriousness and he immediately spoke of it to my son. With unfailing kindness, he assured him that he did not believe it, but at the same time he advised him to send his apothecary, the poor scholarly Humbert, to the Bastille in order that he might clear himself. You can imagine how much that

¹ The Abbey of Saint-Denis was built in the thirteenth century on the site of an oratory some hundreds of years older. It served as a burial place for the Kings of France and members of the Royal Family, but was ransacked in the Revolution, when the coffins were thrown into a pit in the ground, from which as many as possible were exhumed and restored to their places at a later date. The horrible treatment the Royal corpses received at the hands of the people is described by Lamartine in the *Histoire des Girondins*.

hurts me. I am quite beside myself. Some say that the wicked story comes from Spain. If that is so the Princesse des Ursins¹ must be a real devil to carry her vengeance on my son to such extremes. Annoying that dame has cost him dearly. . . .

Madame's estimate of her son's character.

21st February, 1712.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Let me tell you how yesterday's affair ended. After my son had sent Humberg to the Bastille to be interrogated, the King forbade them to receive him there, firstly because he does not believe what is being said about my son, and secondly because the doctors who performed the autopsy upon the two bodies declare that they found no trace of poison in either one or the other, and that the Dauphiness died of measles, and it was the bad atmosphere and grief which were responsible for the Dauphin's death. All the doctors can testify to that, which proves amply that no one, least of all my son, caused the two deaths ; so I hope that, with God's help, this wickedness will soon die down. I did not, however, know when I retired to bed that Humberg had not been received at the Bastille, so I never closed an eye all night. . . . To know Humberg is to like him. His mind is clear and not at all befogged as the minds of scholars usually are. Nor has he their pedantic gravity, but is, on the contrary, always gay. All his learning, even on the most abstruse subjects, seems to be for him but a pastime with which to amuse himself. He condescends to crack jokes and laughs at himself. I am sure you would like him. His voice is very soft and he speaks very slowly, but he makes himself understood very well. The sciences suit my son best. They are in keeping with his character. When, on the other hand, he tries to act the buffoon, it is deplorably unbecoming to him. The young folks, including even his daughter, laugh at him on

¹ Marie-Anne de La Trémoille, Princesse des Ursins, had accompanied Philip V. to Spain in 1700 and had acquired a great power over him and his first wife. Madame's son, Philippe d'Orléans incurred her enmity and the King of Spain's suspicion during his campaigns in Spain.

these occasions, but it does no good. It befell my son as we read in fairy tales where the fairies are invited to the baptism of children. One wishes that the baby may grow up beautiful, another that he shall be eloquent, the third that he shall excel in all the arts, the fourth that he shall take to all manly exercises such as fencing, riding and dancing, the fifth wishes him skill in the art of war, the sixth that he may exceed his comrades in valour, but the seventh fairy, whom they had forgotten to invite to the baptism, said: "I cannot take away from this child any of the things that my sisters have given him, but I shall so cross him, all his life, that the good gifts they have given will be no good to him. For instance, I shall make him walk so badly that people will think he is lame and hunchbacked. I will make him grow such a thick black beard, and will cause him to pull such hideous faces, that he will be an object of ridicule. I shall make him dislike all forms of athletic exercises, and I shall plant evil desires in his heart which will make him lose his taste for all the arts, music, painting and drawing. I shall endow him with a love of solitude and a horror of all good people," etc.

How the doctors treated measles.

10th March, 1712, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

You, too, will certainly be aghast when you hear how sorrow continues to smite us here. The doctors have made the same mistake again as they did in the case of the Dauphiness, because while the little Dauphin¹ was all flushed with measles and in a sweat they bled him and then gave him an emetic, with the result that the poor child died during the operation, which shows clearly that it was the doctors who killed him. His little brother had exactly the same illness, but while the nine doctors were busy with the elder brother the younger one's nurse shut herself up with her little prince and gave him some wine and a biscuit. Yesterday the child was very feverish, and the doctors

¹ Son of the Duc de Bourgogne and great-grandson of Louis XIV.

LETTERS OF MADAME

wanted to bleed him also, but Madame de Ventadour and the prince's under-governess, Madame de Villefort, protested vigorously against it. They absolutely refused to allow it to be done, and contented themselves with keeping the child nice and warm. He is now, by the grace of God, and to the doctors' shame, recovering, but he would have been dead as surely as his brother if they had been allowed to have their way.

I must again tell you how abominably wicked people are here. Although neither my son nor any of his people had anything to do with the child, either from afar or at close quarters, yet it is being said quite openly that he poisoned the young Dauphin, and is only allowing the younger prince to live because he is afraid of the King of Spain's returning, since the King of Spain hates my son. . . .

The Dauphin dies of grief.

13th March, 1712, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I am sure there are at least a hundred duly canonised saints who were less worthy of canonisation than our late Dauphin, the second one, I mean, because, horrible to relate, we have lost three Dauphins in eleven months. One was forty-nine, one twenty-six, and the other five years old. I don't think there can be another such instance in history. The Dauphin most certainly died of grief. He was extraordinarily fond of his wife, and it was sorrowing for her death that gave him his fever. For several days the fever ran an irregular course, but afterwards it returned every fourth day. They bled him. After his wife's death his forehead came out in spots, which, however, did not prevent him from going out. It was not until Monday evening that he took to his bed. His skin became discoloured with many purple stains and spots, which were larger and quite different from the ordinary measles rash. They gave him stimulants and tried to make him sweat, but the perspiration would not flow freely. On Wednesday night, after everyone had gone to bed, he caused an altar to be brought to his bedroom and partook of holy communion with great devotion.

A few hours later he received Extreme Unction. From that moment his mind began to wander. He wanted to get up and go to the chase or to the war. He raved continually and recognised nobody. At eight o'clock he was becoming more and more feeble, and at nine o'clock he drew his last breath. They laid him in state in his room from eleven o'clock until three o'clock in the afternoon, when a bed was prepared in a coach and his body was taken to Versailles. Next day, after twenty-four hours had elapsed, an autopsy was performed on the dear prince, and he was found to be quite putrified. His heart was withered and flat, wherefore it was concluded that he had died of grief. . . .

The unpopularity of the Duc d'Orléans.

19th March, 1712, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

I cannot imagine why my son should be so much hated in Paris. He has never harmed a single person. Neither his late father nor I were ever unpopular in Paris, and, thank Heaven, I am not even now. To tell you the truth, I think it must be because many of my son's servants were jealous of Humbert, of whom my son made a great favourite, and rightly so, because he is a distinguished scholar, and a charming man, who is always cheerful and good company. These servants hoped that they would injure Humbert by spreading a rumour that he was a poisoner. But it is the politicians who have played this trick on him. They fear my son and serve the interests of other people, together with those who would not like to see him take part in the meetings of the Council, where he would, if I may say so, show himself more intelligent and learned than themselves. I have looked into the matter very carefully, and the King, I am convinced, does not believe these stories which are being told about my son, any more than the slanderers themselves do, but they are being circulated amongst the people in order to make my son odious to them. . . . If you only knew what people here are like, you would not be surprised that these lies have distressed me. When the cabals undertake anything, success comes easily to them, because people

LETTERS OF MADAME

have no freedom of belief here as they have in Germany. Prison and exile are the punishment for freedom of thought.

It is my son's own fault that his daughter¹ is so wilful and obstinate; he brought her up so badly. I do not think that the Court will copy her manners, because she isn't in favour with anyone.

The King does not usually entertain any members of the Court except those who have been with him from childhood, such as Monsieur le Grand, the Maréchal de Villeroy and so forth. If I had not been allowed to go to the King's room I should never again in my life have heard his voice except at audiences. When the King is going neither to shoot nor to Marly, he spends the whole afternoon with Madame de Maintenon, and he works in her room with his ministers every evening. My last chat with him in the evening is at the supper table, and I sometimes succeed in saying something which makes him smile.

It is different here from Holland, because no one, except perhaps the ministers, is allowed to discuss affairs of State. Many people do so, but it is not liked. . . .

Madame is sorry for the Old Pretender.

24th March, 1712, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

In the Sanctuary² they talk a great deal about the events of the past, but not a word is said about present-day affairs either of war or peace. Nor is any mention ever made of the three Dauphins or the Dauphiness for fear of reminding the King. As soon as he begins to broach the subject I quickly speak of something else, and pretend that I did not hear him.

God grant that there may be no more serious obstacle

¹ The Duchesse de Berri was only fifteen years old when she married the grandson of Louis XIV. She had always been adored and spoiled by her father. Her brilliant marriage increased her obstinate pride to such a degree that her perpetual and violent quarrels with her sister-in-law, the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and her mother, whom she hated for having been born out of wedlock, were the scandal of the Court.

² Madame's name for Madame de Maintenon's apartment where the King spent most of his time.

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to the conclusion of peace than that of recognising the Queen of England as the legitimate queen and acknowledging in like manner the heir she has chosen for herself. I feel sorry, nevertheless, for our King of England.¹ He deserves more happiness than he has ever had. He is an amiable and well-brought-up prince. I believe that even if the Queen of England had not insisted upon it, the Elector of Brunswick² would still have been recognised here as the heir apparent.

A scandalous epigram on the Palais-Royal.

27th March, 1712, Versailles.

Time was when my son was popular with everyone, but since the Spanish affair he is hated by the whole of Paris, and nothing pleases the Parisians better than to have some evil to say about him. The affair did not happen as it is related, and even if it had I cannot see what business it is of the Parisians, but everything is like that here. You can imagine that I do not relish knowing that there are notices pasted on the walls of the Palais-Royal worded thus : “ *Voici où se font les lotteries et où on trouve le plus fin poison.*” By “ *lotteries* ” they mean to imply that my son lives with his daughter after the manner of Lot.³ People do not expect my son to be a saint, but they do object to his blaspheming as if there were no God, and as far as that is concerned they are perfectly right. I have told him about it a hundred

¹ James Francis Edward Stuart, the Old Pretender, at this time living at Saint-Germain.

² George-Lewis, Elector of Brunswick, afterwards King George I. of England.

³ The Duc d'Orléans' great love for his eldest daughter, the Duchesse de Berri, was the subject of scandalous stories and suggestions of which there was never the slightest proof. There is on the contrary overwhelming evidence that the whole scandal was part of the campaign of ridicule and defamation to which Philippe d'Orléans was subjected from now onwards until his death in 1724. As death after death increased the importance of the Orléans branch of the Royal family, the efforts of the legitimatised princes and their party under the Duc du Maine to blacken the character of the Duc d'Orléans and destroy his popularity with the people became more desperate and unscrupulous. After two centuries these accusations, in view of what is known of the Regent's character, seem merely absurd, but at the time they succeeded to some extent in fulfilling their object.

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times, but he will not listen to me. My sight is beginning to fail badly. My son was accused also of the death of Seignelay, because a month previously they had had a meal together after a game of cards in the ballroom. . . .

Intrigues against the Duc d'Orléans.

8th April, 1712, Marly.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Since Monsieur Hassenberg will put this letter into your own hands, I shall take advantage of the opportunity to tell you what is at the root of my son's trouble. Monsieur du Maine, Madame la Duchesse and the Duc d'Antin, who are the most ambitious people living, endeavour by every means in their power to dishonour my son because the King likes him. As long as Monseigneur was alive they contented themselves with working upon him and the Duc de Bourgogne. They succeeded with the former, but could make no impression on the latter, who was more fair minded than his father. For a year past and since Monseigneur died they have been busy. They have dragged the old Maintenon woman into their cabal, and she told the King that my son poisoned the last Dauphin as well as the Dauphin and Dauphiness. They thought that the King would be so shocked by this revelation that he would send my son away from the Court without enquiring into it. I heard about it in this manner: When the doctors came to report to the King that they had examined everything thoroughly, and that the two deceased had certainly not received any poison, the King turned to Madame de Maintenon and said to her, "Well, well, madam, didn't I say that what you told me about my nephew was false?" Several of d'Antin's servants were seen spreading this story about amongst the people of Paris. All this proves that our judgment was correct, that the old woman would be very glad to see the pupil¹ she brought up seated upon the throne. She hates the lot of us, but I make a pretence of not suspecting it. . . ."

¹ The Duc du Maine.

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More trouble in the Royal Family.

Easter Day, 16th April, 1712, Versailles.

This should have been a day of rejoicing, but, instead of hearing the shouts of alleluias, weeping people are to be seen everywhere, because the poor little baby, the Duc d'Alençon,¹ died at midnight last night. I had been expecting it for a long time. There is no doubt that he was too young to stand being bled. His father and mother are quite inconsolable, and I am very sorry for them. I am anxious too about the Duc de Berri, because he has what is called a slow fever all the time and looks terribly ill. His brother looked no worse when he was dying. Prince Ragotzki has reassured me somewhat, however. He says that the Duc de Berri will be feverish for as many days as the bleeding lasted, because he has seen cases where, when people have been bled in similar circumstances, fever has set in immediately afterwards, and has lasted as long as the bleeding lasted. God grant that it soon vanishes and he doesn't get worse. . . .

The Duc d'Orléans and his family.

21st April, 1712, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Although the old woman is my bitterest enemy, I nevertheless wish her a long life, for the King's sake, because everything would be ten times worse if the King were to die at this juncture, and he is so devoted to the woman that he would assuredly not survive her, therefore I hope that she may live for many long years to come.

With regard to the Duc de Berri, he would not be so foolish if he had not been allowed to grow up in such ignorance, but he knows nothing about anything, does not even appreciate his own rank, and is, moreover, very obstinate. He is very much in love with his wife, but unfortunately she is not in love with him, and although she behaves better than she used to, I am afraid that she will

¹ Son of the Duc and Duchesse de Berri.

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become flighty. She is very much inclined towards it, and *Bon chien chasse de race*, her mother, in spite of her seriousness, has always an affair on hand. It must be acknowledged, however, that she conducts them discreetly and never causes a scandal. Paris thinks her pure as a vestal, but I know her at closer quarters, and know very well what she really is. We get on well enough together, and I am careful not to do the slightest thing to annoy her. I also advise my son to keep the peace with her, for what would be the use of a scandal? The King would take his daughter's part, and however great the scandal my son would have to go on living with her, so it is better for him to do so with his eyes shut. This obliges her to help my son with the King and speak for him. In this matter my son takes my advice and approves of it. As for the others, this is what they are like : the Duc du Maine and La Duchesse are the most ambitious people in the world. They try by every means in their power to keep themselves in favour, and since the Duc d'Antin is in high favour, they are always on the lookout for a chance of supplanting their half-brother, so they do not like each other at all. Madame d'Orléans and La Duchesse also hate each other like the devil. La Duchesse wanted the Duc de Berri to marry one of her own daughters, and she cannot forgive her sister because her daughter was preferred. Moreover, she is now trying to estrange Madame d'Orléans and her dearly-beloved brother, and that gives rise to much ill-feeling. Such is the inner circle of the Court at present. . . .

The Memoirs of the Comte de Grammont.

8th May, 1712, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

. . . . I am very glad that Anthony Hamilton's¹ manuscript amused you so much. I was sure it would, and that is why I sent it to you. But if you had known the Comte and Comtesse de Grammont, as I have, the book would have amused you even more. The character of the two spouses is perfectly drawn. I knew Matta also and

¹ *Mémoires du Comte de Grammont.*

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the little Germain. It is not a bad picture of good King James either, but according to my idea he ill-treats my uncle Rupert too much . . .

Madame's illness is not due to spleen.

8th July, 1712, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . . My left side swells up greatly very often, which hinders my breathing. My doctor, however, won't let me blame my spleen. He declares that that is not the spleen at all. . . .

Two English remedies.

9th July, 1712, Marly.

Milady Kent's powder is an excellent remedy and one not to be despised. It won't make you sweat unless you take a very large dose. . . . I should think that the drops which did so much good to you and to so many others must be the English drops. A grain of opium makes a hundred of them with the addition of two roots of which one is called *asarum* and the other sassafras. There is no better remedy for the chest.

Lord Bolingbroke visits Madame.

24th August, 1712, Fontainebleau.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The day before yesterday I had to receive the *Comte de Saint-Jean*, or Lord Bolingbroke.¹ His figure and face are very handsome. He said to me, "When the Queen sent me to this Court she ordered me to assure you of her goodwill." I replied to him, "I am very much obliged to the

¹ Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751), Secretary of State. In 1712 he came to Paris to conduct negotiations for peace, which led to the Peace of Utrecht in 1713.

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Queen of Great Britain for having remembered me, and I beg you to give her my thanks. I often hear the Queen's praises sung by my aunt the Electress of Brunswick." His only reply to that was a smile, because he spoke very little. I have myself heard the Queen of England¹ say that she would rather see her son dead than a Protestant. As far as he is concerned he does not seem to be as religious as he used to be, but I don't know whether he has other intentions.

The Old Pretender slips away from Saint-Germain.

9th September, 1712, Fontainebleau.

. . . . It is quite true that our Chevalier de Saint-Georges has departed without anyone knowing where he has gone.

The Old Pretender is not a bigoted Catholic.

10th September, 1712, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Scarcely had our King of England departed than Lord Bolingbroke came to Paris. They saw each other at the opera, and now the poor young King has gone away and no one knows where he has gone. I pity the Queen with all my heart, and she is inconsolable. She deserves better fortune, because she is the best princess in the world. Our King of England, the true one, is no longer so much against those of the religion since he has taken only Protestants into his service.

The residence of the Old Pretender.

22nd September, 1712, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

The Chevalier de Saint-Georges is at Châlons, where he will remain until a residence is assigned to him where he can live in complete security.

¹ Widow of James II.

Mystery of Lord Bolingbroke's dealings with the Old Pretender.

25th September, 1712, Versailles.

. . . . I know from a sure source that the English who have been here have never seen the young King anywhere except at the opera, and that they have never seen the Queen at all. No one at Versailles will acknowledge that Lord Bolingbroke has seen the young King except at the opera, where his box is opposite to that of the Chevalier de Saint-Georges.

Impertinent behaviour of the Duchesse de Berri.

1st October, 1712, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

Our Duchesse de Berri is more foolish and impertinent than ever. Yesterday she tried to snub me, but I told her what I thought of her plainly. She came in all dressed up in a fine dress with more than fourteen bodkins of splendid diamonds. That was all very well, but she had a dozen patches on her face which became her very badly. When she came up to me I said, "Madam, you are marvellously attired, but I think you have too many patches on, that does not look sufficiently dignified. You are the highest lady in the land, and your rank requires you to be a little more dignified than to go about covered with patches like a clown on the stage." She made a face and said, "I know that you do not like patches and consider them unsuitable, but I like them very much, and I have only myself to please —" I interrupted her. "That is a mistake due to your extreme youth, because before pleasing yourself you should try to please the King." "Oh," she said, "the King gets used to anything, and I have made up my mind to bother about nothing and to consider no one." I laughed and said, "With those sentiments you will go far. Listen while I tell you what I think. I speak for your good because my duty as your grandmother demands it, and because the King requires it of me, otherwise I should prefer to take no notice." "Yes," she replied, "because it will do no good

and no one will prevent me from doing as I like ——” I said, “So much the worse for you; but since everything you have said arises from the ignorance and delusions of youth, I hope that you will change your mind. Did you never hear the Dauphiness being told that people must not think only of themselves, and how sorry she was not to have been more sensible earlier?” “As far as I am concerned,” she said, “I consider myself good enough and shall not change.” I said, “It is not sufficient for you to be pleased with yourself, everyone else must be able to like you as well.” At that she got up, and I said, “You have a wilful little head there that will get you into lots of trouble.” “What do you mean?” she said. “You understand me,” I replied, “and that is enough. But if you don’t understand me, experience will soon enlighten you on that point.” She went off with this lecture. You see what sort of a little fool we have to deal with. That evening I told her father all that had taken place, adding that I hoped that he would teach his daughter how to speak to me, because I had been patient this time, but would not undertake to be so every time, and was quite capable of complaining to the King of the manner in which she received my advice. My son was scared and begged me to say nothing, and promised to give her a good scolding. . . .

The Château de Rambouillet.

5th October, 1712, Rambouillet.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

In this letter I am not going to talk of anything but Rambouillet.¹ Last Monday at two o’clock in the afternoon the King got into his coach. He put me beside him, while Madame d’Orléans sat behind alone, and on the strapontins with their backs to the doors sat my son and Madame de Brancas, neither of whom can bear to be seated with their backs to the horses. As we drew near Saint-Cloud, the King ordered them to drive slowly because two hundred and fifty young ladies from Saint-Cyr were lined up in four

¹ Residence of the Comte de Toulouse, younger legitimatised son of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan.

divisions, yellow, blue, green and red. Madame de Maintenon sat in her carriage at their head and presented them to the King. Madame Dangeau and Madame de Caylus were in charge of the girls. Afterwards we went on at a good pace, finding relays at—I have forgotten the name of the place, but that won't matter to you—and arriving here at eight o'clock. This house looks small from the outside, but inside it is quite large, and there are, I don't know how many beautiful and very comfortable lodgings. The King's lodging contains first of all a long hall, in which his Majesty has his meals. High up between two windows is a life-size portrait of the King. Opposite to it, between two doors, is a portrait of the late Monseigneur. On each side of the portrait of his Majesty is a door. That on the right opens into a chapel, and that on the left into the King's ante-chamber. Beside Monseigneur are portraits of the King and Queen of Spain, and above the two doors I have just mentioned those of the late Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne. The King's ante-chamber is in the form of a small gallery. The tapestry is very fine, and represents the Emperor and Empress of China in all sorts of settings. Here they are to be seen sailing on the water in their galleys, while there they are seated on thrones on the land. The King's room is very large and extremely beautiful. The tapestry depicts the Palace of Thetis. Thetis is sending for her son Achilles, to whom the nymphs are bringing arms, etc. . . .

The Old Pretender and Protestantism.

9th October, 1712, Versailles.

I think that if anyone were to ask our King and the Queen of England whether the young King should turn Protestant, they would reply no. But if he were to do so without their knowledge, they would have to accept the accomplished fact. He is no longer a child, since he is twenty-four years old. He is actually in Lorraine at the castle at Bar.

CHAPTER IV

1713-1714.

Queen Anne and the Old Pretender.

12th January, 1713, Versailles.

To the DUCHESS OF HANOVER,

Queen Anne knows very well in her soul and conscience that the young King¹ is her brother, and you remember that at the time some unprejudiced persons in England wrote you yourself that there had been no fraud. Besides, the young King is too like all his race for his legitimacy to be doubted, and his mother, moreover, is too good a woman ever to have stooped to such deceit. In fact for twenty-four years we people here have watched her leading the life of an angel. I feel sure that before her death Queen Anne's conscience will begin to prick her, and she will do her brother justice.

A disease which is dangerous to English people.

3rd June, 1713, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . . You make me feel anxious about your nephew, and I am afraid that he may have consumption, which is a very dangerous disease for the English. If he has this disease and the place where he lives is bad for him, he should be sent to Montpellier. Many English people have recovered their health there simply through breathing the air.

¹ James Francis Edward Stuart, the Old Pretender.

LETTERS OF MADAME

The daughters of the Duke of Wolfenbittel.

15th July, 1713, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

How strange it is that all the members of the family of Wolfenbittel are so scattered ! One is at Salsthat, a second on one of her estates, and the third in Brunswick, so that they have very little to do with each other. I agree with you that the Duchesse de Bevern is the luckiest of the three sisters. The Empress leads a very narrow and boring life, and the wife of the Czarowitch is greatly to be pitied, because as soon as the Czar is dead Muscovy will revert to savagery. But to be able to remain in one's own family, near relatives, is, I should think, the greatest happiness on earth. In foreign countries one is always regarded with suspicion, jealousy is aroused, and there are hundreds of people whose only object in life is mischief making, and everybody unites to crush one when in trouble. I could write a huge book on this subject, but I shall not say more than is necessary, especially as all my letters are read and it has struck eleven, and I must proceed to write to my aunt. . . .

A good German.

15th July, 1713, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Prince Ragotzi is here under the name of Charouht. He is a fine fellow, witty and always good tempered, who has read a great deal and knows something about everything. He asked to see my medals and engraved stones, and I showed them to him with great pleasure. I cannot stand seeing Germans who despise their native tongue to the extent of not wishing to speak or write to other Germans. Such conduct makes me furious. If I did not hear the Queen of Prussia¹ extolled on all sides as a very good princess, I should have been afraid lest she had picked up foreign faults with foreign idioms and no longer upheld our good old German principles.

¹Daughter of the Electress Sophia of Hanover, and Madame's godchild.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Madame dislikes tobacco.

5th August, 1713, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Tobacco is horrible stuff. I sincerely hope that you don't take it. It makes me furious to see the women here with their noses as dirty as if they had plunged them into filth. They put their fingers into the snuff boxes of every man they meet. I confess that makes me thoroughly disgusted.

The Abbé Dubois and ghosts.

19th November, 1713, Marly.

They were telling at my dinner table how two very intelligent men who used to say that they did not believe in ghosts are now firmly convinced that they do exist. One is the Abbé Dubois, who used to be my son's tutor, and the other is Fontenelle of the Academy, who wrote that book called the *Pluralité des Mondes*. They also related all they had seen and heard, and I told Leplat to listen carefully so that I should be able to tell you all about it. My son, however, thinks that Fontenelle only pretended to be so credulous because he is at loggerheads with the Jesuits. They accuse him of having no belief, and he seized this opportunity of demonstrating that he had some sort of belief. As for the Abbé Dubois, he is the biggest rogue and impostor in Paris, so he takes care not to expose the trickery of others. It is something to be thankful for if he refrains from adding some of his own. . . .

The Duc d'Orléans and the Duchesse de Berri.

24th November, 1713, Marly.

My son and his daughter are, as you know, very fond of each other. That, unhappily, has been the cause of wicked things being said about them, but now they are beginning to hate each other and fight like the devil every day, and,

worst of all, the daughter embroils her father with her husband. The father has gone off to Paris in despair. He conceals everything from me, but I hear about it from his wife and pretend that I know nothing about it. . . .

A lesson in etiquette.

27th December, 1713, Versailles.

My son is a grandson of France, and the grandsons of France are of higher rank than the princes of the Blood. To be sure they have not as many privileges as the children of France, but they have many more than the princes of the Blood. Thus my son eats at the King's table, whilst the princes of the Blood do not. He has never taken the title of First Prince of the Blood, because he is not a prince of the Blood but a grandson of France, that is why he is called Royal Highness. His son, on the other hand, who is first prince of the Blood, is called Serene, not Royal, Highness. He doesn't come to the King's presence every morning and evening, but is only there on ceremonial occasions when the whole Royal Family dines with the King, nor has he any of the privileges his father has, such as a closed carriage, a master of the horse, a chief almoner, etc. His officers may not wait on him in the King's presence. He has no guards to his residence, and in a hundred similar things he has not the same privileges as his father. I must have made a slip in writing, because my son has never been a prince of the Blood. The King has certainly given the rank of princes of the Blood to the Duc du Maine, his sons and his brother, but only after the real princes and princesses of the Blood. It is true that the Duc du Maine's wife¹ sits above him in his own house, and that she takes precedence of him in everything. When they sign a contract, she signs in the place appropriate to the rank to which she was born, whilst he only adds his name after those of all the princes and princesses of the Blood. He is therefore far removed from my son. Between them come all the princes of the Blood. As for me, my rank cannot change. If the King had a daughter she would be called Madame, and I should be

¹ Anne Louise de Bourbon Condé.

Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans. My son's wife is called Madame, la Duchesse d'Orléans, the *la* showing that she is not a daughter of France but only a grand-daughter. One has to be used to this Court to be able to make all these distinctions correctly. The Dauphin did my daughter a great injustice in declaring that she should come after the married princesses of the Blood. In spite of all, it is quite evident that she is the first, because her brother is the first prince of the Blood. Madame la Duchesse was, however, a great favourite with the first Dauphin, and she made him do whatever she liked, and the King used to agree to everything the Dauphin asked. . . .

The Pope's declaration against Father Quesnel is causing a great deal of discussion here. All the Bishops have come together over the affair. I don't know what it is all about, and it bores me to hear it mentioned. Whatever decision they may come to in the matter, I shall not sleep less soundly. When someone recently caught me reading the Luneburg Bible, and accused me of disobeying the Pope, I replied, "I am doing nothing against the Pope's decrees. He forbids people to read Father Quesnel's Bible, or the Bible in French, but since this one that I am reading is neither Father Quesnel's nor in French, it doesn't come within the scope of his prohibition. . . .

CHAPTER V

1714-1715.

Madame's occupations.

10th February, 1714, Versailles.

TO MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

Happily for me I do not care for gaming, because I am not rich enough to gamble with all my fortune as others do, and I have no use for a game with small stakes. Although I do not play, the time does not hang heavily on my hands when I am in my cabinet. I have a rather fine collection of golden coins, and my aunt has given me silver and bronze ones, and I have two or three hundred old carved stones. I have also many copper pieces, of which I am equally fond. Moreover, I am very fond of reading. So I am never bored whether it be wet or fine weather. There is always something to do, and I write a great deal as well. On Sunday I write to my dear aunt, the Electress, and to my daughter in Lorraine. On Monday to Switzerland and to the Queen of Spain. On Tuesday to Lorraine, Wednesday to Modena, Thursday to Hanover again, Friday to Lorraine, and on Saturday I make up anything I have not been able to write during the week. When, therefore, in a single day I have written twenty pages to the Princess of Wales, ten or twelve sheets to my daughter, twenty in French to the Queen of Sicily, I am so tired that I cannot put one foot in front of the other.

A strange remedy.

11th February, 1714, Versailles.

TO THE DUCHESS OF HANOVER.

. . . . The Queen of England at Saint-Germain is lying at death's door. After she had received the Viaticum and Extreme Unction they gave her a remedy to make her

sweat, namely a few drops of the blood of an animal which is unknown to me, called *bouquetin*.¹ The Queen did not sweat much, but the remedy, nevertheless, did her a great deal of good.

Death of the Queen of Spain.

22nd February, 1714, Versailles.

They say that Monsieur de Torcy has received a courier from Spain announcing that the charming and intelligent Queen of Spain² is dead. . . . God grant that I may be mistaken, but I am tempted to believe that the King of Spain will marry the Princesse des Ursins.

The illness of the Duc de Berri.

3rd May, 1714, Marly.

. . . . The Duc de Berri is lying here seriously ill. He had an attack of fever and ague lasting from Sunday night until Monday morning at four o'clock. He said nothing about it but got up and dressed himself and tried to go to find the King's doctor, but the shivering came on again and he could no longer conceal it, and as he had a violent headache he was forced to return to bed. The fever has become worse and is accompanied by terrible vomiting. First he brought up matter which was quite green, then black as coal, but yesterday when they examined the black matter they found that it was clotted blood. He was discharging blood from both above and below, but the doctors were quite happy about it, and thought the Duc de Berri was out of danger because they expected to be able to stop the bleeding. We all went to Versailles to rejoice with Madame de Berri because her husband was out of danger, but that night he was seized with such terrible sickness that he could keep nothing down, so he must be very dangerously ill, although he is hardly feverish now and the sickness has stopped. They have just come to bleed him for the fifth time. I myself am quite sure that the

¹ A wild goat.

² Marie Louise-Gabrielle de Savoie, younger sister of the Duchesse de Bourgogne.

strong dose of emetic they gave him is the cause of the trouble, because they made him take nine grains, that might quite likely have made him break a blood-vessel. Others say that a week ago while out hunting he was trying to hold in his horse, which had stumbled badly, and thus broke a blood vessel. He began to feel ill at once, but kept the accident a secret. On Friday he had diarrhoea, felt listless and had no appetite. On Sunday evening he began to vomit. I have just left his room, where they are preparing to bleed him for the eighth time. He is terribly feeble. He has had a plate of jelly to eat, which, by your leave, he brought back. He has very little fever, but all this clotted blood frightens me, and I am very much afraid that he will become worse. That would be terrible. God grant us His aid, for we have great need of it.

Death of the Duc de Berri as the result of an accident.

6th May, 1714, Marly.

I prophesied only too well, alas, when I said last Thursday that the poor Duc de Berri would not pull through. The unfortunate prince did indeed die last Friday at four o'clock in the morning. He could still speak three quarters of an hour before he passed away, and he died with great firmness. He only regretted having been himself the cause of his death, and lamented not being able to see his wife before he died. Just at the end he showed a great consideration for his grandfather, the King, because when they asked him if he wouldn't like to receive Extreme Unction, he replied: "Yes, gladly, but not until the King has gone to bed, so that he may be spared a scene which might be very harrowing for him." However, feeling himself very ill, he said, "No, we will not delay, I see that it is urgent." The King himself went to fetch the Holy Sacrament, and we were all present at the sad ceremony which lasted three quarters of an hour. A more heartrending scene could not be imagined. It was enough to break one's heart. An hour and a half before, Madame d'Orléans and I had been to see the poor invalid. He thought he was out of danger, and said to me laughingly, "This time, Madame, I think I can say that I am saved. I am no longer feverish and I have no more pain." He

shouted out loudly, "Give a chair to Madame and a seat to Madame d'Orléans. We will have a chat." "No," I replied, "talking might bring back your fever; don't chatter so much." He was then seized with a violent fit of hiccoughing and spoke with difficulty, because he could hardly breathe. Madame d'Orléans, who thought that he was quite out of danger, was very much surprised to see me with tears in my eyes when we came away. She asked me why I was crying, and I said, "God help us, Madame, can't you see by his breathing, his speech and that hiccoughing that the prince is dying?" She wouldn't believe me, but she saw afterwards that I had spoken only too truly. Just before he died the poor Duc de Berri confessed that he was himself to blame, because the previous Thursday, that is the week before, as he was hunting in a wood, the ground of which was damp from a slight shower of rain, his horse's front feet slipped. He pulled it up sharply, and the horse reared so suddenly that the pommel of the saddle hit him between the breast and the stomach. He immediately felt a terrible pain but said nothing about it. The same evening he passed some blood, but forbade his valet to say anything about it to anyone. He thought he had dysentery, and was loath to say anything about it for fear of being made to swallow heaps of remedies. He hoped it would pass away soon of its own accord. On Friday he began to feel uncomfortable, but said that it was only a little diarrhœa, and on Saturday he went to the chase. That very day a peasant who had seen the blow that the prince had received asked one of the King's men, "How is the Duc de Berri?" "He must be quite well," replied the other, "because he is out wolf-hunting to-day." "If he is really very well," said the peasant, "then princes must have harder bones than we peasants, since I saw him receive a blow on Thursday at the chase while he was pulling up his horse which would have burst open three peasants." If he had said one word about all this he would not have been given the emetic, but he knew himself that he was bringing up clotted blood and yet he took the emetic. That proves that when a misfortune is fated to happen everything helps it. His illness had all the symptoms of a virulent fever, nose bleeding, drowsiness and sickness accompanied by a high temperature which came on in the morning at four o'clock on Monday.

He wanted to go hunting again that day. Monsieur Fagon, who has just been to see me, told me that from the moment the Prince brought up the clots of black blood there was no hope of any remedy because there was already gangrene in his body. My ladies, who saw the poor prince eight hours after his death, say that he was so changed that no one would recognise him. I did not see him, because I am quite harrowed enough. They took the body straight away to the Tuileries, where all the ceremonies will take place. On Friday I went to Versailles to see the poor Duchesse de Berri. She is greatly to be pitied, because she has sufficient intelligence to realise the extent of her loss and the greatness of her misfortune. From being the most fortunate woman in the world she will become the most miserable, unless she has a son, and she is quite sure that she will only have a daughter. . . .

15th June, 1714, Rambouillet.

. . . . It is quite certain that the Princesse des Ursins has more power in Spain than the King, to whom the same thing may happen as to his great-grandfather, Louis XIII. That King said to one of his courtiers, "Is it true that you have been expelled from the Court?" And the other replied very pertinently, "Sire, I hope not, since you know nothing about it." The same sort of thing goes on down there. . . .

The Queen of Spain was not beautiful but she was young, sensible and charming. A prince aged thirty is no longer a child that he should let himself be managed by a woman. . . .

Death of the Duchess of Hanover.

10th July, 1714, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I cannot express the state of grief into which my aunt's¹

¹ Sophia, Electress of Hanover. This princess was a granddaughter of James I. of England and sister of Madame's father, the Elector Palatine Charles-Louis. She was a good and intelligent woman and a Protestant, for which reason she was chosen to succeed Queen Anne on the English throne, but predeceased her, and her son succeeded on the Queen's death as George I. The Electress had had entire charge of her niece as a child and Madame always had the greatest regard for her and wrote to her twice a week until her death.

LETTERS OF MADAME

death has plunged me, and I have in addition the torture of being forced to hide my sorrow because the King cannot bear to see doleful faces around him, so I have to go to the chase as usual.

The Duchesse de Berri enjoys many advantages.

22nd July, 1714, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I should be easily comforted if I had nothing else to trouble me but the premature confinement of Madame de Berri, who has given birth to a still-born child. The child is certainly better off since it is assuredly with the Lord, and the mother is strong and well. I don't think she is to be pitied because she has neither child nor husband. She has a higher rank than she could ever have aspired to, since she is the first lady in France, and she has 250,000 francs more income than I have, because I have only 450,000 francs while she has 700,000. So you see she is very well off, and her household expenses are no greater than mine, which gives her a surplus. She is young, healthy and so greatly beloved by her father and mother that they do whatever she wants. She has, moreover, the most beautiful jewels you could ever see. I cannot see, therefore, how she could possibly be unhappy. If she were Queen, it would only mean that she had more restraints, and she would be no better off.

*The bastards are raised to the rank of Princes
of the Blood.*

9th August, 1714, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

We hope that Barcelona will soon be taken. . . . An incident which I think funny is the bravado of the governor, Villareal. When he was summoned to surrender, he replied that he himself would give the signal for capitulation. He

had made up his mind that when the defence could no longer hold out, he would place himself on a barrel of powder and have himself blown up. In the meantime he has had a black flag embroidered on which death's-heads are sprinkled.

You will have read in the papers about the accident which happened to the Duchesse de Vendôme, whose carriage was upset. . . . She had been to compliment her sister, the Duchesse du Maine, on what you will also have seen in the papers, namely that the King has declared to the Parliament that all the bastards are raised to the rank of Princes of the Blood, and are eligible to succeed him in the event of the failure of the legitimate line.

Epsom salts become fashionable.

9th August, 1714, Marly.

Last Tuesday my doctor bled me, and on Thursday and Friday he purged me with such effect that I had to retire to my wardrobe thirty times. Perhaps you know the drug which had such a drastic effect on me. It is a new medicine, and is a salt which comes from England, but is so fashionable that no one in Paris will take anything else. It is called Epsom salts. It has to be dissolved in water, and the first day they made me drink three large beer glasses of it, and two the second day.

Queen Anne is dead.

23rd August, 1714, Versailles.

. . . . From thence I went to Sainte-Marie de Chaillot where our Queen of England passes the whole summer, and there I learned for certain that Queen Anne of England was dead, and that our Elector of Brunswick was, a few hours later, proclaimed King of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland.

Madame has a cold.

1st September, 1714, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

We have been here since the day before yesterday. We slept at the Duc d'Antin's house which is called Petit-Bourg. It is a lovely spot to stay in, and the garden especially is magnificent.

I did not come with the King because two days before we left Versailles I caught a horrible cold in my head, together with a bad cough.

I was afraid of disgusting the King and being a laughing-stock for the young people by spitting and blowing my nose, so I came on in my own carriage with my ladies and my dogs. Yesterday they went hunting, and I was not there. Time was when I should have sorely regretted missing a good chase, but now I don't care anything about it.

The manners of the Prince of Wales.

6th September, 1714, Fontainebleau.

Thank, I pray you, the Princess of Wales,¹ for her kind remembrances. . . . Between ourselves, no one has a good word to say for the Prince of Wales. Everyone who has seen him declares that he has the manners of the ridiculous marquis in Molière's comedies. They must be a heritage from the d'Olbreuse family. He is also thought to be, as it were, a little cracked. . . . People here took in very good part the notification which our Elector made immediately he ascended the throne, and they already call him King George.

¹ Caroline of Anspach.

Madame's daily round.

20th September, 1714.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

You seem to think that my life is passed in one round of pleasure and amusement. In order to undeceive you, I am going to tell you how it is regulated.

I usually get up at nine o'clock and go—you can guess where. Next I say my prayers and read three chapters of the Bible, one in the Old Testament, one in the New, and a Psalm. Then I dress myself and receive visits from many members of the Court. At eleven o'clock I go into my cabinet where I read or write. At midday I go to Church, then I dine alone, which doesn't amuse me at all, because there is nothing I find more boring than to be alone at the table, surrounded by servants who watch everything I put into my mouth, and although I have been here for forty-three years I have not yet got used to the abominable cookery of this country. After my dinner, which is usually finished by a quarter to two o'clock, I return to my cabinet, where I rest for half an hour, then I begin to read and write until it is time for the King's supper. Sometimes my ladies have a game of *hombre* or *brelan* at my table. Madame d'Orléans, or the Duchesse de Berri, or sometimes my son, comes to fetch me at nine or ten o'clock. At a quarter to eleven o'clock we go and take our places at the table and await the King, who sometimes does not arrive until half past. We eat our supper without saying a word, and then go into the King's room, where we stay for as long as it takes to say a *Pater*, then the King bows and passes into his *cabinet*. We follow him, but I have only been admitted there since the death of the last Dauphiness. The King talks with us. At half-past twelve he bids us good-night, and we all retire to our own apartments. I go to bed, and Madame la Duchesse begins to play. Gaming in her rooms goes on all night until daybreak. When there is a comedy I go to it at seven o'clock, and then on to supper with the King. When there is a chase it starts at one o'clock, so I get up at eight o'clock and go to Church at eleven o'clock.

LETTERS OF MADAME

The eccentric Lord Peterborough.

22nd September, 1714, Fontainebleau.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have seen Lord Peterborough¹ twice, and he talked very amusingly. He is as witty as the devil, but is very eccentric, and he speaks in a peculiar manner. . . .

Madame's ideas on England and her kings.

1st November, 1714.

To MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

I find it difficult to rejoice in our King of England's elevation, because I should not trust the English with a single hair of my head. I have lately discovered how much the fine speeches with which Lord Peterborough came here are worth. I would rather that our Elector were Roman Emperor than King of England, and that the King of England who is here were in possession of the kingdom which is his by right. I am afraid that the English, who are very fickle, may before long do something which won't be at all to our liking. It is hard to become King in such a brilliant fashion and to be crowned amongst the joyful acclamations of the entire nation as King James was, and then to have his people persecute him afterwards so piteously that he could hardly find a little spot in which to seek peace after his many troubles. If the English were to be trusted, I should say that it was a good thing that the Parliament should exercise control over King George, but the more one reads about the revolutions there have been in England, the more one is aware of their inconstancy and the eternal hatred they bear their Kings.

¹ Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough (1658-1735). A clever statesman, who, however, never inspired confidence ; and a brilliant general. He led the allied forces in Spain in 1705, when the French were driven out.

The inaccuracy of newspapers.

3rd November, 1714, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have already read four pages of the *Gazette*, but I haven't yet found the paragraph I am looking for. I shall continue the search. Ah! here it is. My dear Louisa, how badly they translated the address I made when I presented the Prince of Saxony to the King! Never in my life have I called the King *Sire*, but always *Sir*. The children of France (as we are called) never say *Sire* to the King. It is the grandchildren of France, as for example my son, my daughter, etc., who begin to give him that title. This is what I said to the King: "Sir, this is the Prince Electoral of Saxony, who begs me to present him to your Majesty." The Prince then presented himself, with a fine distinguished manner, and paid his compliments to the King without the least embarrassment, whereby he gained the entire approval of the King and of the whole Court. The King replied very politely to him. If none of the news received in Germany from France is more trustworthy than the story of how I presented the Prince, the correspondents earn their money very badly. . . .

The King of England has sent me word by Monsieur Martini, that as soon as he arrives in England, he will write to me and will keep up a correspondence with me. Yesterday Monsieur Prior brought me a letter from the King, but it was not in his handwriting and was written by a secretary. I should not have expected it of him after Monsieur Martini's compliment, but I should not be surprised at it when I remember how this King has always behaved towards me. He is the opposite of his mother. Whatever happens, I shall always remember that he is the son of my aunt, and I shall wish him every prosperity. And that is what I am writing to tell him to-day. I am very sorry for the Princess of Wales, because I really like her, and I find her full of praiseworthy sentiments which are rare in these days.

The little Dauphin.

11th November, 1714, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The little Dauphin looks very ill when he is teething, but when he is well he is a beautiful child. He has very dark big eyes, a chubby face and a pretty little mouth, which, however, he keeps open too much. His nose is so well shaped that it would be difficult even to imagine a finer one. He has shapely legs and feet. In fact, he is more handsome than plain, and he has always been better looking than his little brother, but the latter was stronger and more lively. . . . Our Dauphin already understands maps as well as a grown man. I can't understand, my dear Louisa, how you could so easily make up your mind to cross the sea. The person who could persuade me to go on board a ship would be very clever, because there is nothing I fear as much as the sea.

Madame's pets.

27th December, 1714.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

After my dinner, I walked for half an hour in my room to aid digestion, and amused myself with my little animals, for I have in my chamber two parrots, a canary, and eight little dogs.

CHAPTER VI

1715-1716.

The unsociability of George I

4th January, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I don't consider it at all nice of the King of England to have known that you were in England and not to have taken any notice of you. Even though he had not any relationship with you, he should have, for the sake of his mother, been polite to you and paid you attention, but I can see that the worthy King troubles himself very little about people of whom his mother was fond. What would you? Everyone's character is different, and you can't change yourself at the age of fifty-four.

The downfall of the Princesse des Ursins.

10th January, 1715.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Yesterday great news arrived about the Princesse des Ursins, who has governed Spain for so long and was more powerful than the new Queen,¹ to whom she should have been governess. Her pride has ruined her. She wrote letters which were derogatory to the new Queen, to whom they were shown, and when she went to meet the Queen she only descended half-way down the stair, criticised the Queen's attire, scolded her for being too long on the way, and said that if she were in the King's place she would

¹ Elisabeth Farnèse (1692-1766).

feel inclined to send her home again. Thereupon the Queen ordered an officer of her bodyguard to take the foolish woman out of her presence and put her under arrest. At the same time she sent a messenger to the King to complain strongly about the lady's behaviour. The King replied that she was to do whatever she thought fit, so at eleven o'clock that evening the princess was packed into a carriage with one serving-maid and some grooms and guards, and orders were given that she was to be taken forthwith back to France, which was done. I have no sympathy for her, because she always treated my son in an abominable manner, and she persuaded the King and the late Queen to believe that my son wished to dethrone them and had conspired against their lives, which was such a falsehood that, however much she tried, she was never able to produce the slightest justification in the world for her accusations. So it happens naturally that I am not the least bit in the world sorry for the misfortunes that have overtaken her. I am anxious to discover whether the wicked fiend is coming here, because she will not fail to pour forth her poison against me and my son. Heaven preserve us ! I will let you know anything fresh that happens with regard to this old woman.

We have received the sad news that the Archbishop of Cambrai² died a few days ago. He was a great friend of my son's, and is deeply regretted.

There is a Prince d'Anhalt-Zeitz here who brought me very complimentary messages from the Prince of Wales, but the King never sent me a single word. . . . I do not know why he shows me such lack of respect, because if I had been a Protestant he could not have been King, as I was nearer to the throne than he, and it is only through my family and his mother that he is King. I pray you, my dear Louisa, to be good enough to thank the Prince of Wales in my name and tell him that I am much obliged to him. When King William was still alive and Princess Anne was only the next to the throne, she used to write to me through the medium of Lord Portland, but I can see that the present King wishes to have nothing to do with me, and I must make the best of it.

² Fénelon.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Bezoar stones; and a superstitious ambassador.

7th February, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The day before yesterday Lord Stair handed me the bezoar stone of Goa,¹ which the Princess of Wales has done me the honour of sending me. I am greatly obliged to her, and I beg you, my dear Louisa, when you see the Princess to express my gratitude to her, which comes from the bottom of my heart, and which I cannot express for lack of words. Few things in this world have so touched me as the continual kindness which this Princess has shown me, and which are clear proof of the affection she had for my aunt, for I have not the honour to be personally acquainted with Her Highness. As for the bezoar stones, they are made by the Jesuits at Goa, and my son has boxes full of them which the Fathers sent to Monsieur. It astonishes me that people in England will have anything to do with, or have any faith in anything which comes from the Jesuits. I said so to Lord Stair, and thereby made him laugh heartily. I remember that the Duchesse de Bouillon, who died last year, helped herself one day to two pieces of Monsieur's and made off with them. Monsieur, who had seen what she did, ran after her to get them back, and they had a regular tussle over them, but victory crowned the Duchess. It was very funny. There is no news here. Everyone is talking about the Persian Ambassador who made his entry into Paris to-day. He is the funniest looking object you ever saw. He has a soothsayer with him whom he consults at every opportunity, to know which are the lucky and unlucky days and times. If it is suggested that he should do anything and the day proves to be an unlucky one, he is furious, grinds his teeth, draws his sword and wants to kill everyone. . . .

¹ A bezoar stone was a calculus, found in the stomach or intestines of certain animals, which was supposed to have antidotal properties. The bezoar stones of Goa were manufactured out of a chemical composition at Goa and were used as substitutes for the genuine stones.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Love flees before poverty.

12th March, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Cardinal de Bouillon died last week at Rome. He was no great loss because he was as false as the devil, enormously wicked and horribly debauched. In fact he was worthless, and that is the best funeral oration he can be given.

To proceed to what you told me about your niece, I am deeply touched by your faith in me, and I will say that the marriage in question appears a suitable one to me, provided that the prospective groom has sufficient to maintain his wife in accordance with her rank. Then, if the two young people love one another, all will be well. But if he has not the means to live up to his rank, the matter should not be given another thought, because it is my opinion, dear Louisa, that love passes with time; then come worries and quarrels, and, in the meantime, a heap of children have arrived who cannot be reared as becomes their position, and instead of the marriage having united two people in mutual love, it has brought together two bitter enemies. I have seen more than one such case, and that is why I warn you.

Lord Peterborough would like to remain Captain of the King of England's Guards. He should sign his name as the nuns do here, for they put after their names "*religieuse indigne*"; so, in like manner, he should write after his name "Unworthy Captain of the Guards." . . .

A pageant for a child.

3rd April, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

After dinner my grandson, the Duc de Chartres, came to see me, and I arranged for him a spectacle suitable to his years. It was a triumphal car drawn by a big cat, in which was seated a little lady dog called Andrienne. A pigeon acted as coachman, two others were pages and a

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dog served as footman and sat up behind. His name is Picart, and when the lady alights from the carriage, Picart lets down the step. The cat's name is Castille. Picart allows himself to be saddled and has a doll put on his back, and he will do everything that the domestic horses do. . . . England certainly has much for which to thank the Duchess of Portsmouth,¹ who is the best woman of her class that I have ever come across. She is very polite, with very pleasant manners. When Monsieur was alive we often had her at Saint-Cloud, and I know her very well.

Madame de Maintenon still hates Madame.

10th April, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The hatred which that wretch² has for me will last as long as she lives. She never misses an opportunity of doing me an ill turn and annoying me. Now she has a greater grudge against me than ever, because I refused to receive her particular friend who was turned out by the Queen of Spain.³ My son asked me not to receive her, as she is his implacable enemy and tried to make him out a poisoner. He did not content himself with proving his innocence, but had all the evidence at the enquiry taken to Parliament so that it might be preserved. Naturally, therefore, I refused to receive such a woman, but we have a proverb which says very truly, "Birds of a feather flock together," as the Devil said to the charcoal burner.

The indiscretions of Lord Peterborough.

15th April, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The person who is all powerful here is vexed because the Queen of Spain wrote only to the King, and she has

¹ Louise de Kérouailles. A Frenchwoman in the pay of Louis XIV. who became mistress to Charles II., and was made Duchess of Portsmouth by him.

² Madame de Maintenon.

³ The Princesse des Ursins.

LETTERS OF MADAME

had no letters from her. You may be sure that she will do her best to make her displeasure felt, but the Queen is a long way off, and has nothing to ask of her. . . .

With regard to the Prince of Schwarzenberg, I have no comment to make except that for German princes a sojourn in England is even more disagreeable and liable to unpleasantness than a stay here, because there they are allowed no rank. If Lord Peterborough talks about his King and the Prince of Wales in England in the same way as he does here, then he certainly deserves to be exiled from Court.

Madame is in a bad temper.

19th April, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

To-day I am, as they say in the dear Palatinate, as cross as a bug, and I have certainly good reasons for so being, but I will only give you one sample of them. The King, desiring to reward the Princesse des Ursins, who behaved so badly to my son and tried to brand him as a poisoner, has awarded her a pension of 40,000 francs. There are also two other happenings which arouse my ire, and are no better than that, but I must hold my tongue and say nothing of what I think about them.

A scene in an English theatre.

21st April, 1715.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am very sorry about the death of the Prince of Sicily, on account of his mother, who is a very good Princess. Yesterday I received a letter from her Majesty which would have melted a stone. . . . This Queen was only two years old when I came to France, and has had, so to speak, no other mother but me. She loves me as if I were indeed her mother, and I look upon her as my own child. I was also very fond of her sister, the Queen of Spain,¹ but with

¹ The Queen of Sicily and her sister were daughters of Monsieur by his first wife, Henrietta of England.

a sisterly affection, because I was only ten years older than she.

I have been told a funny story about England. Perhaps you will know whether it is true. The story goes that the Prince of Wales was present at the theatre and someone played the part of the late Queen Anne, giving a very good imitation of her. She was drunk and threw herself over a chair. A lord sprang on to the stage, drew his sword and struck the actor in the face. The Prince called to the captain of his guards to fire on the nobleman, but the whole pit rose crying that if a single shot were fired, it would be the signal for the destruction of the King's whole party. The captain of the guards told the Prince that although it would be all right to fire such a shot in Hanover, it was quite another thing in England. They say that the Prince of Wales is completely at loggerheads with his father, and that they do not speak to each other, also that a sort of petition was presented to the Prince in which it was stated that if he has any sense of honour he should recognise that he has no claim to the kingdom, and that it should revert to the lawful sovereign, who is known as the Pretender, and who is the son of James, just as surely as the Prince is the son of the Count of Königsmarck. If this was really done, it was insolent in the extreme. Truly, England is a peculiar country, and nowhere else in the world are such people as the English to be found. There is a Genoese Ambassador here who has such a horror of them that he says that not only would nothing induce him to live in that country, but that he would even be sorry to have his portrait found there.

Madame receives a bequest from her aunt.

7th June, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The ring which my aunt, the dear Electress Sophia, asked them to send me will be very precious to me, and I shall not be able to receive it without shedding tears. It shall be worn by me as long as I live, and I shall bequeath it to the Prince of Wales, so that it will always remain in

the hands of people my aunt loved, and by whom she was beloved. I don't think there is any doubt but that someone has done you a bad turn with King George, judging from the markedly disagreeable manner in which he treats you. You should demand an explanation of him and disabuse his mind of what has been said about you. He is considered a just man, so he must have been deceived.

A birthday present.

18th June, 1715, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

This morning between eight and nine o'clock as I was washing my hands, my son came into the room bringing me a most beautiful present. He gave me seventeen old golden coins as beautiful as if they had just come from the mint. They were found near Modena, as perhaps you may have read in the *Gazettes de Hollande*, and he had had them brought secretly from Rome. Such an attention on his part has given me the greatest pleasure, not so much for the value of the present as for his thoughtfulness.

Madame goes to visit her grandchildren.

18th June, 1715, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It will be impossible for me to write to you on Wednesday, because that day I am going at nine o'clock to Paris to the Palais-Royal to breakfast with my grandson, the Duc de Chartres, and Mademoiselle de Valois. Afterwards I shall take the two of them to the Jesuit College to see a comedy acted by the pupils, all of whom are children of good birth. Amongst them is a boy whom my son had by the Séry woman¹ who used to be one of my maids of honour. He is known as the Chevalier d'Orléans, and shows lots of ability. He is not good looking, however, and is very small for his age. His brother, my grandson, is very fond of him, and is looking forward to this play as a great treat.

¹ Marie-Louise-Victoire Lebel de la Bussière de Séry, Comtesse d'Argenton. She had three children by Philippe d'Orléans, of whom only the second was legitimatised.

How Madame would re-arrange Europe.

12th July, 1715, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I should very much like to correspond with the Princess of Wales, because I am sincerely attached to her Highness, but between ourselves, relations with the Court of England are very strained, so that, however much I desired, I would not be able to get into touch with her. When things change I shall not fail to do so. The Princess could make anyone fond of her, and she is so good that she cannot fail to be loved and respected. . . .

Politics are not my province, but it is, I trust, permissible to express hopes, and mine would be that King George might be Emperor, and the Chevalier de Saint-Georges might enter into possession of his three kingdoms. Then everything would be, according to my ideas, very well arranged, for thus our dear Princess would find herself Queen of the Romans, Prince Ernest-Augustus would become Elector of Brunswick, and Prince Max, who is a Catholic, would enter the Church, be made Cardinal, and be promoted to the Archbishopric of Osnabrück. It seems to me that this arrangement would be perfect. Would to Heaven that it could be realised! I expect you will say Amen from the depth of your heart.

Two of Madame's granddaughters.

18th July, 1715, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have brought with me one of my son's daughters who has never seen a chase. She is the third of those who are still living, as the eldest died long ago when she was barely three years of age. This one is called Mademoiselle de Valois, and is fourteen years old. When she was still quite young I used to hope that she would be very pretty, but I was greatly mistaken. She has grown a huge straight nose which quite spoils her. She used to have the prettiest little nose in the world. Isn't it remarkable how children alter? I think that the reason she has developed this

LETTERS OF MADAME

unfortunate nose is that she was allowed to take snuff. If they had listened to me they would not have sent any of their children to the convent, but it was their mother's idea not mine. The second daughter¹ is determined to become a nun, which pains me but delights her mother. I am, moreover, quite certain that everyone will regret it in the end. I have nothing with which to reproach myself, because I have done all I can in the affair. There is lots more to be said about this business, but not the sort of things that can be trusted to the post. . . . On Monday the King took us all to inspect his regiment which is encamped near here. It was certainly worth seeing. The soldiers have all been reclad, and their uniform is light grey with golden-coloured silk trimmings and flame-coloured ribbons.

English Catholics in France.

8th August, 1715, Marly.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

As soon as I return to Versailles I shall have a copy made of my portrait by Rigaud,² who has caught my likeness in a remarkable degree. You will see from it, my dear Louisa, how much I have aged. It is not to be wondered at that the Pretender should wish to regain the throne which belongs to him by every right of birth, and from which his religion alone excludes him. I don't know how the English can hate him; he is one of the best and most honourable men that the Lord God ever made. . . . When English Catholics come over here they pretend to be full of piety. Some years ago I saw at my aunt the Abbess of Maubuisson's a man whom I took to be an officer. He had a large wig and cravat, and since he carried no sword I thought he must be a prisoner. He was good looking, though not young, and I asked who the officer was. My aunt began to laugh, and told me that he was a monk of the Order of Saint-Francis.

¹ Louise-Adélaïde d'Orléans, afterwards Abbess of Chelles, under the name of Sainte-Bathilde.

²This portrait is used as frontispiece to *The Letters of Madame*, volume I.

who had come from England. Afterwards he told me with tears streaming down his face that the Catholic religion was so much hated in that country that the monks dare not wear their habits there. I replied that if that was all that was the matter he had not much to complain of, because a wig was more becoming than a shaved head. At this dialogue my aunt was fit to burst with laughing. . . . Madame d'Orléans is not of my opinion with regard to her daughters. She would like them all to become nuns, not that she is so silly as to imagine that that would ensure their going to Heaven, but from pure laziness on her part, because she is the laziest woman in the world, and she fears that if she keeps them with her she will have the trouble of bringing them up. There is nothing in the world that disgusts me more than the habit of snuffing tobacco. . . . With a nose soiled with tobacco, a person looks as if he had fallen into the mud. The King hates it, but his children and grand-children take it, although they know that it displeases him. . . .

The last illness of Louis XIV. begins.

15th August, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Our King is not well, which worries me to such an extent that I am half ill, and have lost my appetite and cannot sleep. God grant that I am mistaken, but if what I fear comes to pass, it would be the greatest misfortune that could happen to me. If I were to explain everything to you it would be so terrible that I cannot even think of it without my flesh creeping. Say nothing of what I have told you to anyone in England, but I am very much afraid. . . .

Madame is anxious about King Louis.

20th August, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

You saw from my last letter that I have received a very cordial letter from King George written in his own hand-

LETTERS OF MADAME

writing. Madame de Maintenon has not been ill, she is strong and well. Would to God that our King was as well, then I should be less worried than I am !

The King takes leave of his family.

27th August, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

First of all I must tell you that yesterday we saw the most sad and moving sight it would be possible to imagine. The King, after being prepared for death and receiving the last sacrament, sent for the Dauphin to speak to him and give him his blessing. Then he sent for me as well as the Duchesse de Berri and all his other daughters and grandchildren. He bade me farewell so affectionately that I marvel I did not fall down in a swoon. He assured me that he had always loved me even more than I myself imagined, and that he was sorry he had sometimes caused me sorrow. He asked me to think of him sometimes, adding that he knew I would do so gladly because he was sure that I had always been fond of him. He said also that he gave me his blessing and hoped that I would be happy all my life. I threw myself at his feet, took his hand, and kissed it. Then he embraced me and turned to the others. To them he recommended that they should stand by each other. I thought that he was talking to me and replied that in that, as in everything else, I would obey his Majesty as long as I lived. He began to laugh and said, "It is not on your account that I speak thus ; I know that you do not need such advice, but I am speaking to the other princesses." You can imagine what a state all this has thrown me into. The King's courage is beyond description. He gives his orders as if it were only a question of going on a journey. He has said good-bye to all his household, and has recommended them to my son, whom he appointed Regent, with so much affection that it touches me to the heart. I believe that I shall be the first member of the royal family to follow the King when he dies. He is still alive but is growing feebler and feebler and there is no hope left. When I say that I shall be the first to follow I am thinking first of my advanced age and then, that as

soon as the King is dead they will take the young King to Vincennes and we shall all go to Paris, where the air does not suit me at all. I shall stay there in mourning, deprived of exercise and fresh air, and it seems likely that I shall fall ill. It is not true that Madame de Maintenon is dead. She is in perfect health and remains in the King's room, which she never leaves night or day.

The King is dead.

6th September, 1715, Versailles.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It is a long time since I wrote to you, but I could not help it, I was so overwhelmed and in such inexpressible sorrow. The King died¹ last Sunday at nine o'clock in the morning, so you can imagine that I had many visits to pay and receive, and that I have received and answered many letters. The day before yesterday and to-day two have come from you, but I am not in a fit state to reply to them because I am terribly upset, both by the death of the King and because I must go to that hateful place, Paris. If I were to pass a whole year there I should fall very ill, so I want to leave it as soon as I can and go to Saint-Cloud. All this worries me dreadfully, but self-pity leads nowhere. It would be better for me to answer your letter. I am very frank and natural and say whatever comes into my head, so I shall tell you that it was a great comfort to me to see all the people and the entire Army and Parliament come to see my son and publicly acknowledge him as Regent. His enemies, who were plotting all around the King's deathbed, have all been frustrated and their followers have had to leave the lists. But my son takes his responsibilities so much to heart that he has no rest night or day, and I am afraid that he may become ill. All sorts of mournful ideas come into my head, but I cannot tell you of them.

My son made a speech to the Parliament, and they say that he spoke not at all badly. The young King is very delicate. The ministers who governed under the late King have kept their places and, as they will doubtless remain as curious as ever, letters will still be opened.

¹ Louis XIV. died of gangrene.

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Madame becomes an important personage.

10th September, 1715, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . My son has given me a new apartment which is incomparably finer than the old one. I hope my health will benefit by it, but I very much dislike living here. . . . Yesterday the body of the late King was borne to Saint-Denis. The Royal Household is all scattered. The young King was taken to Vincennes yesterday, Madame de Berri to Saint-Cloud, and my son's wife and myself are here. My son also came here after accompanying the King to Vincennes. I do not know where the others have gone. I have not seen the Duke of Leeds and have never heard of him. It seems to me that it must be the fashion in England to drink too much. When the Duke of Richmond was here he was drunk all day long. . . .

The Duc d'Orléans is recognised as Regent.

13th September, 1715, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . The King himself was good and just, but the old woman so dominated him that he did nothing but what she and the ministers wished, because he trusted only her and his confessor, and as the dear King was not very learned, the Jesuit and the old woman on the one hand, and the ministers on the other, made the King do whatever it pleased them. The ministers, too, were usually creatures of the old wretch. I can assert truthfully, moreover, that whatever wrong was done was not the King's fault, because they took advantage of him and led him astray. Yesterday the young King was taken before Parliament for his *lit de Justice*. My son's Regency was recorded, so it is now a definite and assured fact. I am sure my son would like me to be happy here, but that is not in his power to effect. I wish I could have a fever, as I have promised not to leave Paris unless I fall ill. The headache which I am always certain to have as long as I stay here does not count, but as soon as I have

a fever I shall return to my dear Saint-Cloud. My son has lots else to do besides thinking of my pleasure and comfort. He has great need of prayers to God for him. He seems to be determined to follow the King's last commands and to live amicably with his relations. I think that what he can look after himself will go well, but many things must necessarily escape his direction. He has already created various councils, one for civil affairs, another for religious affairs. There is also a council for foreign affairs and one for war. He can only do what is decided upon by them, and it is difficult to believe that the council for religious affairs, which is composed of priests, will show itself favourable to the Protestants. I have firmly made up my mind not to meddle with anything at all, because France has, to her sorrow, been governed by women too long, and I do not want to give people, by any action of mine, cause to bring any similar reproaches against my son. I hope my example will open his eyes and that he will not allow himself to be governed by any woman. Saint-Cloud is an enchanted spot to me, and quite rightly so because there is no place in the world more pleasant to stay in, but if I had gone there all Paris would have hated me, so out of consideration for my son I must stay away from it. Do not imagine, my dear Louise, that the King's death makes me free to do what I like. One is obliged to act according to the customs of the country and is in no sense master of one's own conduct. In my situation I am, indeed, the victim of greatness, and I must resign myself to doing what I have no liking for. . . . It is true that everyone thought that the King was dead when Madame de Maintenon withdrew. He had lost consciousness for a long time, but he came to himself again later.

King Louis' last hours.

I don't want to dwell on such sad things, which upset me greatly. The King showed the greatest firmness right up to the last moment. He said with a smile to Madame de Maintenon, "I have heard it said that it is hard to die, but I assure you that I am finding it very easy." He lay twenty-four hours without speaking to anyone, and during the whole time he did nothing but pray and repeat, "Oh God, have

1.



2.

1. MEDAL OF PHILIP, DUKE OF ORLEANS, 1716.

Reverse : Regent accepting the helm of State from France.

2. MEDAL OF MADAME, 1717.

Reverse : Duchess as Cybele and legend, " Mother and daughter of gods."

(*The British Museum.*)

pity upon me ! Oh Lord, I am ready to appear before you, why do you not take me, oh Lord ? ” Then he repeated the Dominical Oraison and the Creed with great piety, and died commending his soul to God.

Louis XIV.'s will ; his debts.

17th September, 1715, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Parliament has recognised the right of my son to the Regency, a right which his birth confers upon him beyond dispute. The King told him that he had made a will about which he would have no complaints to make, and this will was found to be entirely in favour of the Duc du Maine, so it is not difficult to guess who dictated it, but we won't discuss it further. My son has too often heard me speak of you not to know you and like you, and he has asked me to give you his most affectionate respects. The task with which he is charged is really no easy affair. He is finding everything in a very sorry condition, and time will be needed to repair such a state of affairs. There is nothing ahead but trouble and worry, and for my son as well as for myself the future does not show itself in rosy colours. More than forty placards have been put up in the town against him, and the dukes and peers have tried to make trouble for him in the Parliament, but since my son is very well liked by the people and the army, they had their pains for nothing, and theirs is the shame. I must confess, however, that it makes me very uneasy to see him the object of so much animosity.

Madame dislikes her new mode of life.

24th September, 1715, Paris.¹

I see my son only once a day, and he only stays with me for half an hour. I take my meals alone at table surrounded by a hundred people to whom I must speak whether I want

¹ In this and a number of subsequent letters the name of the person to whom the letter is addressed is not precisely known, and is therefore not given.

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to or not. All day long I receive visitors who interrupt me when I am writing, and with whom I have to make conversation. This goes on until eight o'clock at night. In fact I have nothing but worry and vexation and no pleasure at all. Such is my miserable life.

The Regent's Court displeases Madame.

8th October, 1715.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I betook myself to Saint-Cloud whilst the Duchesse de Berri was here, because, between ourselves, I don't wish to have anything to do with her. We aren't in sympathy with each other. I treat her politely as if she were a stranger, but I do not see her often, and I have nothing to do with anything she does nor with the doings of her mother or sisters. I simply mind my own business. The Court is not like a German one, nor is it what it was in Monsieur's days, when we all dined together and gathered together every evening in the large drawing-rooms. Nowadays everyone lives apart. My son has his meals in his room and I in mine. His wife does the same. She is so lazy that she can never set herself to the smallest task for a moment, and she spends her life reclining on a couch. Madame de Berri follows her mother's example at the Luxembourg. So you see, my dear Louisa, that there is no longer any possibility of having a Court. Alas, you do not know the French. As long as they have any hope of obtaining what they want they are charming, but out of every fifty aspirants there are forty-nine who become enemies and play the devil. I know this Court and country too well to rejoice for a single moment at my son's becoming Regent.

I have kept the promise I gave you and have pleaded strongly for the poor people in the galleys. I have obtained some promises, but they never say no outright to anyone here. Write and tell me what my son has done with regard to the King of England, because I honestly know nothing about it. . . .

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On physicians.

18th October, 1715, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . My doctor is a clever man and is so handsome that one would take him for a colonel rather than for a physician. I thought when I engaged him that if the late Electress Palatine, whom they say married a doctor, had seen this one she would have been unfaithful to her own. For my part, I should find it impossible to marry a doctor even if he were an angel . . . to return to what I was saying, the doctors here are stupid devils and they think there is no one like themselves in the world.

A story about Cardinal Mazarin.

25th October, 1715.

There have been terrible books written against Cardinal Mazarin. He used to pretend to be very angry at them, but he really didn't mind them much. One day he ordered all the copies of these atrocious libels that could possibly be found to be brought to him, saying that he was going to have them burnt. A great many of them were seized, but when he got them into his possession he sold them secretly and made ten thousand crowns out of the transaction, over which he had many a good laugh. "The French," he used to say, "are nice people. I allow them to sing and to write, and they allow me to do whatever I like."

Madame de Maintenon's retreat.

5th November, 1715.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.¹

Madame de Maintenon is at Saint-Cyr in the establishment which she founded. She was not the King's mistress,

¹ Madame was not permitted to correspond with the Princess of Wales during the lifetime of Louis XIV. (see page 90), but she began to shortly after his death.

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but much more. She used to be governess to Madame De Montespan's children, and afterwards got a foothold at Court, where she progressed much further. The Devil in Hell could not have been worse than she was. Her ambition has thrown the whole of France into sorrow. The Fontange woman was a good sort, and I used to know her well, as she was one of my maids of honour. She was beautiful from head to foot, but she had not much intelligence.

How the Pretender reached Scotland.

14th November, 1715, Paris.

I do not believe that the Duke of Argyle is faithful to the King, since he has allowed so many rebels to escape. I expect, too, that many more will desert King George now that the Chevalier de Saint-Georges is in Scotland. This evening I heard the story of how he escaped. He was staying at Commercy with the Prince de Vaudemont in order to go stag-hunting. After the chase the Prince gave his guests a banquet. They stayed at the table until four o'clock in the morning, and when the Chevalier went to his room he said that since he was going to bed so late he would not be able to get up early and would like to be allowed to sleep until two o'clock in the afternoon. When his servants went to waken him at that hour they found no one in the bed. They were alarmed and rushed off to the Prince de Vaudemont, who pretended to know nothing about the matter and declared that a search must be made for the Chevalier. After they had searched for him in vain for an hour, the Prince de Vaudemont said, "Let us begin our dinner because all the drawbridges are up and no one will be allowed to leave the castle for three days." Thus the Chevalier was enabled to reach Brittany unknown. There he pretended to be a traveller and hired a boat from a fisherman, who took him out to sea and put him on board a Scottish ship, on which were many Scottish nobles who accompanied him to his country.

P.S.—Lord Stair has no right to accuse my son of having helped the King of England in his flight. How could he have known what was taking place at Commercy, and since

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the Chevalier de Saint-Georges crossed Brittany unrecognised how could my son have known that he was there ? He was only told about the business a week later, and he then sent people to those regions, but the mischief was already done.

Advice for the Pretender.

3rd December, 1715.

To MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

The Chevalier de Saint-Georges is the best and most charming fellow in the world. He asked Lord Douglas once : " What can I do to gain the sympathy of my people ? " Douglas replied to him, " Set sail from here, taking a dozen Jesuits with you, and as soon as you arrive have them publicly hanged. Nothing would charm the English people more."

The Regent's answer.

27th December, 1715, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It is true that the rebels¹ sent a messenger to my son with a letter, but he sent him straight back and did not open the letter, so, if they send an answer to London purporting to be his, you may bear witness that it is forged.

¹ The followers of the Old Pretender in the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, The Regent did not extend the same sympathy to the Jacobites that Louis XIV did.

CHAPTER VII

1716-1717.

King Louis and his brother compared.

8th January, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

Never were there two brothers less alike than the late King and Monsieur, but in spite of that they were devoted to each other. The King was tall with ash-coloured or light brown hair. He looked manly and was very handsome. Monsieur was not bad looking, but he was very small. His hair was black as jet and he had thick brown eyebrows, large brown eyes, a very long face with regular features, a large nose and very small mouth and bad teeth. His manners were more womanlike than manly. He disliked both horses and hunting, and only liked gaming, holding a court, good eating, dancing and titivating himself up. In a word he enjoyed everything that women like. The King liked hunting, music and the play. Monsieur only cared for great assemblies and masked balls. The King liked to play the gallant with the ladies, but I do not believe that Monsieur was ever in love in his life.

The fancies of a Prince.

9th January, 1716.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

My son is greatly prejudiced in favour of his country, and although he has proof every day how false and deceitful his compatriots are, he is firmly convinced that no other nation can compare with the French.

If my son had liked he could have had his eye better long ago, but when it improves a little he takes no care of it

and exposes it to the night air, and he eats and drinks immoderately, which is not good for the eye. I can assure you that everything that passed between my son and the Queen of Spain was quite honourable. I don't know whether he had the happiness to take the Queen's fancy, but he was never in love with her. He says that she is good-looking and has a fine figure, but that neither her face nor her manners were to his taste. I cannot, it is true, deny that he is a gallant, but he has fancies and everyone does not appeal to him. A grand manner appeals to him less than an air of debauchery, such as the dancers at the opera have. I often tease him about it.

Louis XV. is spoilt as a child.

14th January, 1716.

. . . Our little King¹ is at the Tuileries in the best of health. He has never been ill and is very lively and never stays still a minute. To tell you the truth the child has been very badly brought up. He is allowed to do whatever he likes for fear of making him ill; but I am sure that if he were corrected he would be less violent and that they are doing him a very bad turn by letting him behave as capriciously as he likes, but everyone is keen to gain the goodwill of the King, however young he may be.

The Duchesse de Bourbon, Madame de Maintenon and Madame de Montespan compared.

16th January, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

The Duchess² learnt from her mother and aunt to ridicule everyone. They never did anything else and no one was sacred from their raillery, on the pretext that it amused the King. The children were always present and never knew or heard anything else. It was a rough school, but not so dangerous as that of the children's governess,³

¹ Louis XV.

² De Bourbon.

³ Madame de Maintenon.

because she set about it with an air of great seriousness and no idea of amusement, and under a cloak of devotion and charity told the King all sorts of evil about everyone, for the purpose of improving her neighbours. In this way she gave the King a bad opinion of everybody at Court. She succeeded in preventing the King from becoming attached to and enjoying the company of anyone except herself and her creatures. They were the only perfect people who were free from all faults. This procedure was all the more dangerous because *lettres de cachet*, sending to prison or exile, were the usual sequel of these denunciations. Madame de Montespan, however, never did anything like that. When she had had her laugh at a person she was content and dropped the matter.

A severe winter ; Madame's German visitors.

21st January, 1716, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I don't know what the weather is like in England, but here we are having the most severe cold I have ever felt in my life. It has lasted for five whole weeks and every day it becomes colder, and the temperature to-day is eleven degrees colder than yesterday. The last few weeks we have received no news from England, for which I am very sorry, but am not surprised because people tell me that the sea at Calais is frozen so far out that, although English ships have come, they have had to return to Dover again, as the ice would not allow them to land here, which annoys me, for I am longing to hear how the Pretender (as he is called) is getting on in Scotland, and whether the people are remaining true to King George. The Queen of England was very glad to hear of her son's arrival and good reception in Scotland. The poor Queen is not used to rejoicing, and her satisfaction was so great that the fever she was suffering from left her. . . . Yesterday I had twenty-nine German princes, counts and gentlemen visiting me. . . . Seeing so many Germans around me made me remember a funny story. When your brother Charles-Louis was here I was at loggerheads with the Chevalier de Lorraine, and the rumour spread that your brother was going to provoke the

Chevalier to a duel in order to avenge me. A great many of the most distinguished noblemen of the Court came to me to beg me to accept them as seconds to the Raugrave ; I laughed heartily and assured them that there was no question of any such conflict. I do not know whether the Chevalier heard any talk of this, but one day when Charles-Louis was in my apartment, together with many other Germans, the Chevalier presented himself at the door. As soon as he set eyes upon this gathering he turned hurriedly and made off as if he had seen the devil. One of my friends who saw him said, "Where are you running off to so quickly ?" He replied, "Madame does not love me, and she is surrounded by her Raugrave and other great big Germans. I might have a bad time there, so I am taking the safest course, because who knows what might happen if Madame were to say anything in the midst of all those Germans ? They can't take a joke." We were all greatly amused at this.

You are quite right in saying that my son is a just man, he is far too kind and equitable, and that makes him fall into many mistakes. There are many things which I might tell you in private conversation or by a safe means of communication but not by the post. What is happening reminds me of a story which the Duchesse de Mecklembourg told me. In the days of Louis XIII. there used to be a fool at Court who came in one day wearing a mantle on which he had embroidered many *pies*.¹ There is, you know, a bird which the French call by that name. The fool succeeded in putting himself in the way of the King, who caught sight of his mantle and asked, "What is that you have ?" The fool replied, "Sire, I resemble your Court." "How so ?" asked the King. "Because," replied the fool, "I go *de pie en pie* (*de pis en pis*), and so does your Court." I might say the same about my son.

The charming Duchesse de Bourbon.

26th January, 1716, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Madame la Duchesse has three charming daughters, one of whom, Mademoiselle de Clermont, is very handsome, but

¹ Magpies.

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I consider her sister, the Princesse de Conti, much more likeable. The mother is no more beautiful than her daughters, but she is more graceful, and has a pleasanter expression and more winning ways. Her eyes sparkle with intelligence as well as malice. I always say that she is like a cat which lets you feel its claws while it is playing with you. She makes a mock of everyone, and is very amusing. She ridicules everything in such an entertaining manner that one can't help laughing at her, and she is very good company and says some very witty things. She is very attractive, and can play any character she likes when she wishes to captivate anyone. In all her life she has never had a bad-tempered moment, and if she were not deceitful, as there is no doubt she is, no one would be nicer. She can adapt herself to one's humour, and one might believe that she has real sympathy for the people to whom she is showing it, but she is not to be trusted.

Characters of four Cardinals.

6th February, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

Cardinal de Noailles is certainly a very good and worthy cardinal, which can't be said of them all. There are four of them here who are all different from each other. Three of them have this much in common that they are as false as the gallows, but otherwise they differ in looks and character. Cardinal de Polignac is very well bred and capable. He is insinuating and soft-voiced, but is too much taken up with currying favour and meddling in politics, to this are due all the faults of which he is accused. Cardinal de Rohan is as beautiful in feature as his mother, but he has no figure and is as vain as a peacock, as well as being an intriguer and a slave of the Jesuits. He thinks he runs everything, while in reality he carries no weight in anything, and he thinks there is no one like himself in the world. Cardinal de Bissi is ugly and looks like a peasant dullard. He is haughty, spiteful and false. A more deceitful man could not be imagined, and his subservience makes one sick. His falseness can be read in his eyes, and although he has talents, he uses them only for evil. These three cardinals could put Noailles

into a sack and sell him without his noticing, as the proverb says, because they are all three much more subtle than he is. Bissi is as like Tartuffe as two drops of water. He has just the same tricks.

James II.'s wife falsely accused by her step-daughter.

6th February, 1716.

The Queen of England, James II.'s wife, who afterwards retired to Saint-Germain, should certainly have taken greater precautions, knowing as she did that her step-daughter was accusing her of feigning a pregnancy. I have myself discussed the matter with her Majesty. She told me that she begged Princess Anne to put her hand on her body and feel the movements of the child, but the Princess always refused, and the Queen never imagined, surrounded as she was by so many people all the time, that anyone would throw doubts on her state of pregnancy.

Madame on good terms with her husband.

15th February, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

I entirely won over my husband during the last three years of his life, and succeeded in getting him to laugh with me at his weaknesses and to take everything in good part without losing his temper. He no longer allowed people to calumniate me and attack me in his presence, and he had perfect confidence in me and always took my part. Before that, however, I had suffered horribly and I was just on the road to happiness when Our Lord took away my poor husband, and I saw disappear in a moment the result of all the care and trouble I had taken for thirty years to attain happiness. . . . I am troubled with my spleen and when anything agitates me my left side swells up like a baby's head. . . . I hate staying in bed and must get up the moment I awake.

LETTERS OF MADAME

An eccentric Scottish lady.

18th February, 1716.

Lord Huntly's great aunt, Madame Gordon, was my lady-in-waiting for many years. She was a remarkable personality and was always in a day-dream. One day she wanted to seal a letter while she was in bed, and, letting the wax fall on to her thigh she attempted to use her seal. Then it was she began to feel pain from the burn and began to utter piercing shrieks. She used often to gamble in bed, and on these occasions she would spit all over the sheets and throw the dice on the floor. . . . In the evening when she had to put on my headdress for me to appear at Court, she used frequently to put my gloves on my head and stick my hands into my head-dress. Another of her tricks was to undo the vest buttons of any man she happened to be talking to. Monsieur, my husband, once sent her to give a message on his behalf to the captain of his Guards, who was a very tall man called the Chevalier de Beuvron. Since she was very tiny her hands did not reach to his vest, but nevertheless went fumbling for other buttons. The astonished captain sprang back gasping, "Eh, Madam, what do you want with me?" This made everyone in the drawing-room at Saint-Cloud laugh heartily.

The morals of an abbess.

20th February, 1716.

The Abbess de Maubuisson, Louise Hollandine, daughter of Frederick V., Elector Palatine in the days of Henry IV., has had so many bastards that she always used to swear by "This body which has borne fourteen children."

Where the Pretender's funds came from.

21st February, 1716, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have it on good authority that the Pope and the King of Spain have furnished the Pretender with money. The

LETTERS OF MADAME

Pope gave him thirty thousand *livres*, and the King three hundred thousand *ecus*. As for my son he gave him not a single *liard* nor *obole*.

Princesse des Ursins Madame de Maintenon's friend.

27th February, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

If the *Princesse des Ursins* had not been protected by Madame de Maintenon she would have been ruined before she actually was driven out by the Queen of Spain, because in his heart of hearts the King could not abide her. But anyone who has Madame de Maintenon's support can withstand anything.

A busy day for Madame.

28th February, 1716, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I think the Devil must have come out of Hell on purpose to torment me. I got up at seven o'clock this morning in the hope of finding time to write to the Princess of Wales, my daughter, Mademoiselle de Malause and yourself, and I was able to write the first two letters, but as for the others—impossible. Half a dozen duchesses arrived who took up all my time, then my son came along with a terrible headache. He gave himself a blow while playing tennis which nearly burst his eyeball. He has not spared himself during the three last days of the Carnival, but has been staying up until six o'clock in the morning and leading a dreadful life, which makes me very anxious. The Chevalier de Saint-Georges is with his mother. My son made him leave France.

A very spoilt princess.

1st March, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

Since the Duchesse de Berri was eight years old she has been allowed to do what she likes, so what wonder is it that

LETTERS OF MADAME

she behaves like a wild horse? She is very ruddy-complexioned and often has herself bled, but it makes no difference. She cannot dance, and hates dancing.

The Regent's mistress tricks her husband.

13th March, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

Last winter an amusing thing happened. A lady who is young and pretty¹ came to visit my son in his cabinet and he made her a present of a diamond worth two thousand golden *louis* and a box worth two hundred. The dame had a jealous husband, but she was so bold as to go to him and say that some people who were in great need of money had offered her their jewels for a mere trifle, and she begged him not to let such an opportunity slip. The husband believed it all and gave her the money she asked for. She thanked him prettily and took it. Putting the box in her bag and the diamond on her finger, she went to a gathering of distinguished society people. When people asked her where she got the ring she replied: "Monsieur de Parabère (that was what she was called) gave them to me." Her husband was present and said, "Yes, it was I who gave them to her. Could a man do less when he has a highborn wife who loves him faithfully?" This made people laugh, because there were others who were not so simple-minded as the husband, and they knew quite well where the presents had come from.

Gossip about Queen Anne.

18th March, 1716.

Some English men and women were drawing a horrible picture of Queen Anne. They said that she got drunk, that she had a passion for women, but was inconstant and changed often. Lady Sandwich has said nothing to me about her, but she has talked to my son.

¹ This was the beginning of a friendship of which more will be heard in Madame's letters.

LETTERS OF MADAME

The all-powerful Alberoni.

19th March, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

It is said here that the Queen of Spain is even more beloved by her husband than her predecessor was, but she has less power, because the Abbé Alberoni manages the King and Queen as if they were only children. He it is who is all powerful. In Monsieur de Louvois' time all the dancing and fencing masters had salaries for spying upon the happenings at the German Courts.

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Scandal should be avoided where possible.

19th March, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

If I could have prevented my son's marriage by giving my life's blood I would have done so, but once it was an accomplished fact I only tried to keep the peace. Monsieur was very fond of his daughter-in-law during the first month, but after he realised that she looked upon the Chevalier de Roye with too favourable an eye he hated her like the devil, and in order to prevent his bursting forth I had to impress upon him daily with all my power that he would only bring dishonour upon himself as well as upon his son if he made a scene, and that he could achieve nothing except at the expense of bringing disgrace upon the King. Since no one had desired the marriage less than I had, I was not open to suspicion, and it was evident that I spoke, not from love of my daughter-in-law, but in order to avoid scandal for the sake of my son and all my family. As long as a scandal was avoided the affair must remain in doubt in the eyes of the public, but by the opposite conduct proof would be given that it was true.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Relations of the second Dauphin and Dauphiness.

31st March, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

It is not to be wondered at that the Dauphin¹ loved the Dauphiness, because she was very intelligent and could be very charming when she liked. Her husband was devout and rather melancholic, while she was always gay. That cheered him up and dissipated his gloom, and since he had a great inclination towards the ladies, like all hunch-backs, and was so pious that he thought he would be committing a terrible sin if he looked at any woman but his own, it follows quite simply that he was very much in love with her. I once saw him squinting to make himself ugly because a dame had told him that he had beautiful eyes, but it was not in the least necessary, as the dear sire was already ugly enough, without the necessity of trying to make himself so. He had an ugly mouth, and sallow complexion, and was very small, hunch-backed and crooked. . . . His wife got on well with him, but she was not in love with him and saw him as others did. The dear sire had a wretched figure and his face was not beautiful, but I think all the same that she was touched by the love he bore her, and certainly it would not be possible to be more in love than the Dauphin was with his wife. . . . He had many good qualities and was really charitable, and helped many officers without anyone knowing anything about it. When he was born there were universal rejoicings.

Some of Madame's former enemies.

31st March, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

I became reconciled with the Chevalier de Lorraine to please Monsieur three or four years before he died, and after that he never did me any harm. The Chevalier died in such poor circumstances that his friends had to pay the cost of his burial. He had, nevertheless, an income of a hundred thousand crowns, but he was a bad manager, and

¹ The Duc de Bourgogne.

LETTERS OF MADAME

his servants always stole it. As long as they gave him a thousand *pistoles* when he needed them for gaming or his debauches, he let them waste and pilfer his goods to their heart's desire. The Grancey woman got a great deal of money from him. His end was very miserable. He was with Madame de Maré, sister of Madame de Grancey, and was telling her that he had passed the whole night in debauchery, and was retailing horrible things to her when he was struck down with apoplexy, lost his speech instantly and never regained consciousness.

The Regent's dissipations disliked.

2nd April, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

My son is no longer a youth of twenty, he is a man of forty-two years of age, so Paris cannot forgive him for running off to balls after women in such a hair-brained fashion when he has all the affairs of the State on his shoulders. When the late King came into possession of his throne everything was in a prosperous state, so it was all right for him to amuse himself, but to-day that isn't at all the case. He should work day and night to repair what the King, or rather, his unfaithful ministers have spoilt.

The Grand Dauphin and the Duchess.

5th May, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

The Dauphin¹ was not a man of high enough character to know what true friendship should be. He only used to like people who helped to keep him amused, and disliked everyone else. He used to like to be entertained while he was on the closed-stool, but it was done in quite a modest fashion, because people turned their backs while they talked to him. I have often conversed with him in this fashion in his wife's cabinet, which used to amuse her vastly.

The Duchess² is very amusing. . . . She loves her

¹ The Grand Dauphin.

² De Bourbon.

food, which quite suited the Dauphin. He found an excellent breakfast every morning at her house and a feast in the evening. Her daughters have similar tastes, so the Dauphin used to spend the whole day in congenial society.

The education of a Princess.

5th May, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

The Queen of Spain¹ stayed longer with her mother than did our Dauphiness, and she was, moreover, better brought up. The Maintenon woman knew very little about education, and allowed the young Dauphiness to do as she liked in order to gain her affection and be the only person she loved. That young person had been very well brought up by her good mother, and was amiable and amusing. Frivolity suited her very well, and she was not at all bad looking when she had a good colour. You can't imagine what sort of crack-brained fools, like the Maréchale d'Estrées, surrounded the Princess. The Maintenon woman was well paid out for having given her such foolish companions, because the result was that the Dauphiness began to shun her society, until the Maintenon, trying to discover her reason for doing so, plagued the Princess to make her tell. At last the Dauphiness told her that the Maréchale d'Estrées used to say to her daily, "What do you want with that old woman? Stay with people who can amuse you better than that old carcass can," and that she used to speak a great deal of evil about her. The Maintenon woman told me this herself after the death of the Dauphiness, in order to prove that it was entirely the fault of that woman that the Dauphiness was on bad terms with me. That may have been partly true, but it is nevertheless also true that the old wretch herself stirred her up against me. Almost all the young hussies who were the Dauphiness's companions were relations or connections of the old woman's, and it was by her orders that they tried to amuse the Princess, so that she might like no other society but theirs, and would be bored elsewhere.

¹ Marie-Louise-Gabrielle de Savoie, wife of Philip V. of Spain and younger sister of the Duchesse de Bourgogne.

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The reformation of the Duchesse de Bourgogne.

6th May, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

. . . . When the Dauphiness reached years of discretion, she reformed herself wonderfully and felt keen regret for her past childishness, which shows that she was a sensible woman. . . . She changed her whole manner of living, and became reserved and sensible; then she remembered her early education and, having lots of common sense, recognised her faults quite clearly. She resolved to improve herself and make herself likeable, and in one month she succeeded in bringing over to her side all those whom she had given reason to detest her. She remained thus right up to her death, and used to say frankly how much she regretted having been so silly, excusing herself on the grounds of her extreme youth. She was very angry with the young ladies who had set her such a bad example and had given her such bad advice, and she publicly showed her displeasure with them, and made the King refuse to take them to Marly any more. In this way she won over everyone to her side.

The King's attitude to women in his old age.

9th April, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

Long before he died the King had entirely reformed and was no longer addicted to women. He even exiled the Duchesse de la Ferté for pretending to be in love with him. When she could not see him she used to have his portrait in her carriage in order to look at it all the time. The King said that she was making him ridiculous, and ordered her to remain in her country estates. There were also suspicions that a Duchesse de Roquelaure, who belonged to the house of Laval, had made a conquest of the King, but His Majesty was not annoyed with her as he had been with the Duchesse de la Ferté. There was much scandal talked about this affair, but I kept my nose out of it.

LETTERS OF MADAME

The Prince and Princess de Conti.

16th April, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

The Prince de Conti is really very ugly and has a disagreeable temper and expression. It isn't his face, however, which is the ugliest part of him, because he is very small and dreadfully deformed. He is always very absent-minded, and that gives him a scared look as if he were not quite all there. He has a habit of falling over his stick like a frog when one is least expecting it, and at the late King's Court they were so accustomed to this, that when they heard him falling they used to say, "Never mind, it is only the Prince de Conti falling." His wife is not as smitten with him as he with her, which would, to be sure, be impossible, but she is tactful and humours him. She governs him absolutely, and has so captivated all his favourites that they are her slaves, and she is the lord and master of the whole house. In person she is very charming, being tall, well made and handsome. Her eyes are beautiful, and she is always gay. Her husband is very fond of her, which is all the more surprising since the ladies are not his especial failing, and when he goes to bad houses it is only to torment the poor creatures he finds there. Before his marriage he cared for no woman except his mother, who was very fond of him. Although you would not expect it, he is intelligent and a good talker. His mother is jealous because she has no more control over her son, and he only cares for his wife, so there are many quarrels. She wishes to leave them and take a residence in Paris, so as not to be forced to endure their company, and she would like to take her little grandson with her to bring him up properly, but her daughter-in-law won't hear of it and insists on keeping the child, so they live a cat and dog life together.

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A designing woman foiled by Madame.

24th April, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

The old Margrave of Anspach used to be in love with Mademoiselle d'Armagnac, but he wouldn't acknowledge it, and he used to say that he never had had any intention of marrying her because her familiarity with the Marquis de Villequier, now Duc d'Aumont, had shocked him. The young lady's mother would have liked to have caught the Marquis abed with her daughter, so that she could have made a fuss, but he realised her intention, and behaved so modestly on his visits that he could not be entrapped. To tell you the truth, it was I who warned him to be on his guard, because I knew the mother for a designing woman.

Madame's obedience to her father.

1st May, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

If my father had been as fond of me as I was of him, he would never have sent me to such a dangerous country as this. I only came here out of obedience to him and against my own wishes. . . .

Friendship between Madame and her son.

20th May, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

My son is not at all prodigal with his praises, and if he ever praises anyone they must deserve it very thoroughly. I have never been at loggerheads with him, but he was very much so with me twenty-four years ago when he married against my wishes. I forgave him because I love him, and I don't think that in the future we will ever be vexed with each other again. If I have any remonstrance to make about his conduct I come out with my opinion quite frankly and don't worry myself about it, and he shows me the greatest respect.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Domestic sorrows of the Duchesse de Lorraine.

22nd April, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

My daughter always makes her farewells when she is approaching her lying-in time, because she always expects to die, but all goes well. . . . When once jealousy takes root in the mind there is no way of rooting it out, and the sooner one makes up one's mind how to act the better. My daughter gives no sign, but she secretly suffers greatly, and how could it be otherwise? She is very fond of her children, and the woman whom the Duke loves and her husband are ruining him and will not leave him a farthing.

Craon is a cuckold and a despicable and false wretch. The Duc de Lorraine is well aware that my daughter knows everything, and is, I think, grateful to her for not bothering him and for enduring everything patiently. He gets on very well with her, and she is so fond of him that, provided that he says a few kind words to her, she is quite gay and happy.

Gossip about Richelieu.

5th June, 1716.

Cardinal de Richelieu, in spite of all his ability, used to have violent attacks of madness. Sometimes he would imagine that he was a horse, and would gallop round the billiard table, striking out at his servants with his feet, neighing and making a shocking noise for about an hour, after which his people used to put him to bed, and cover him up well, when he would go to sleep and sweat profusely. When he awoke he would remember nothing of what had happened.

The King's authority powerless against fashions.

16th June, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

The late King once said: "I confess that I feel rather annoyed when I perceive that with all my royal authority

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as King of this country, I have cried out in vain against head-dresses being too high, and no one had sufficient regard for me to make them lower. Then an unknown woman,¹ a baggage from England, comes along wearing a low head-dress, and immediately all the princesses rush from one extreme to the other."

Madame defends her predecessor.

18th June, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

In my opinion Madame² was unfortunate rather than guilty. She had to deal with a very wicked lot of people, about whom I could tell lots of things if I wished. She was very young, pretty, charming and graceful, and she found herself in the midst of the most expert flirts in the whole world, who were the mistresses of her enemies. Their whole aim and object was to get her into trouble and embroil her with Monsieur. Madame de Coetquen was the mistress of the Chevalier de Lorraine without Madame's knowing it, and the Maréchal de Turenne was also in love with this woman. Madame must have confided the whole of the secret negotiations with England to the Marshal. He told Madame de Coetquen, whom he believed to be devoted to Madame, but she went in the night to find the Chevalier de Lorraine and revealed everything to him. The Chevalier took the opportunity to rouse Monsieur against Madame, saying that it would make him appear to the King to be a poor sort of man who was incapable of keeping his counsel and that they didn't take him into their confidence and left him outside whilst important affairs of State were entrusted to his wife. Monsieur tried to make Madame tell him everything, but she refused to tell him the King's brother's business, and that is what came between them. She was annoyed and caused the Chevalier de Lorraine and his brother, Monsieur de Marsan, to be driven into exile, but it cost her her life.

¹ Lady Sandwich, wife of the English Ambassador.

² Henrietta of England, Monsieur's first wife.

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Drinking amongst royal ladies.

21st June, 1716.

Madame la Duchesse can drink a great deal without becoming drunk. Her daughters try to imitate her, but they don't succeed. They haven't such control over themselves as their mother has, and they are often drunk.

The struggle between the Princes of the Blood and the Dukes.

22nd June, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

The bastards of the late King, wishing to have their claims and those of the princes of the Blood settled, have collected a great many members of the nobility and have drawn up a most unjust petition against the Dukes and Peers.¹ My son refused to receive their petition and forbade them to gather together again, because, in their assemblies, they do nothing but plot treason. In spite of this they have continued to meet through the agency of the Duc de Maine and his wife, and they have grown so insolent that they have sent to my son and the Parliament a paper setting forth that the nobility alone has the right to decide the claims of the princes of the Blood against the legitimate princes. Thirty nobles have signed this document. My son has had six of the ringleaders arrested, of whom three have been sent to the Bastille and three to Vincennes. They are Messieurs de Châtillon, de Rieux, de Beaufremont, de Polignac, de Clermont and d'O. This latter is a member of the Comte de Toulouse's household, and is his governour. The wife of Clermont is a lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse de Berri. She is not a tactful woman, and said aloud before the Duchesse de Berri, "However things go, my husband and I would give our heads for the Comte de Toulouse,"

¹ In this struggle Saint-Simon was the leader of the ducal party, and deals with the whole affair exhaustively in his Memoirs. It is plain to see that on this, as on other occasions, the over-weening vanity and petty-mindedness of the little Duke involved the Regent in dissensions which were quite foreign to his indifferent and genial nature, and, besides wasting his time, lost him many friends.

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which shows clearly that everything is being done at the instigation of the bastards. . . . Châtillon has stirred up all the nobility against my son, that is his way of repaying benefactions. My son's wife is pleased and happy because she thinks that her brother's affairs are going well.

Spies ; the Duc de Lauzun.

26th June, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

There was a French refugee in Holland who used to write and tell me how the Prince of Orange's affairs were going on. I thought that I should be doing the King a service by informing him of what I had been told, so I did so. The King was obliged to me and thanked me, but that same evening he said to me with a laugh, "My ministers are sure that you have been misinformed, and that there is not a word of truth in what was written to you." I replied, "Time will show who knows best, your Majesty's ministers or my correspondent, but my intentions were good." Some time afterwards, when it was quite certain that King William was in England, Monsieur de Torcy came to me and said that it was my duty to impart to him any news I heard, and I replied, "You assured the King that I only received false news, so I told the man not to write any more because I do not like to be put off with false news." He smirked, as he always did, and said, "Your news turned out to be quite true." I replied, "A great and clever minister should of course have more trustworthy news than I, and must know everything." The King said to me, "You have been mocking at my ministers," and I replied, "I only gave them tit for tat."

Monsieur de Louvois was the only one who was well served by his spies because he was not sparing of money. All the Frenchmen who were in Germany or Holland were spies in his pay, such as dancing and fencing masters, and servants in every court. After his death this system was not continued, which accounts for the ministers nowadays being so ignorant.

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Lauzun¹ has the most peculiar ideas, and everything he says has a most amusing turn to it. For example, he wished to let the King know that the Comte de Marsan was very thick with Monsieur de Chamillard, who was then a minister, so he said, "Sire, I wished to change my wig-maker, and to employ the one who is at present the fashion. But I could not have him, because for several days now Monsieur de Marsan has had him shut up at his house, making wigs for all the members of Monsieur de Chamillard's household and his friends." He said this in the most artless tone, as if there were no malice intended.

Some artless soldiers.

3rd July, 1716.

Once upon a time Madame de Montespan was present at a review, and when she came near the German soldiers they began to shout, *Konigs hüre, hüre!* In the evening when the King asked her how she enjoyed the Review she replied, "It was perfectly beautiful, but it is very artless of the Germans to call things by their name, because I made a point of ascertaining the meaning of what they were shouting."

N.B.—The Duke d'Antin is the only one of Madame de Montespan's children who was upset by her death.

The birth of the Regent's seventh daughter.

7th July, 1716.

Just as I was finishing my letter to the Princess of Wales, they came to announce that the Duchesse d'Orléans was in the throes of childbirth. It was just eleven o'clock by the time my carriage was ready, and a quarter of an hour before midnight when I entered her ante-chamber. "Nearly an hour ago Her Royal Highness was safely delivered of a child." But the tone of voice was so mournful that I

¹ The memoirs of the time are full of stories of the eccentricities of the Duc de Lauzun.



JACQUES III.
ROI DE LA GRANDE BRETAGNE.

JAMES FRANCIS EDWARD STUART, THE OLD PRETENDER.

couldn't doubt but that Madame d'Orléans had given birth to a seventh daughter, which was unfortunately just what had happened.

King George accuses the Regent of ill faith.

12th July, 1716.

I have seen my son very angry with Lord Stair because he believes that that nobleman does him ill service with the King of England, and that it was he who prevented the King from concluding a close alliance with France and Holland. He has been accused of allowing the Pretender to leave the realm, but that was not in the least his fault. He faithfully and loyally executed the provisions of the treaty by which he undertook not to assist the Pretender nor to supply him with money and arms. He imagines that the English do not want their King to ally himself with France.

The death of the first Madame.

13th July, 1716.

People here say that, although Madame was not beautiful, she had so much charm that it didn't matter. Being incapable of forgiveness, she wanted to have the Chevalier de Lorraine exiled and succeeded in doing so, but he paid her back. He sent poison from Italy to a Provençal gentleman called Morel, and to reward him he was made chief steward. After he had robbed me hugely he was made to sell his charge at an exorbitant price. This Morel was as clever as the Devil, but was faithless and unscrupulous. He has told me himself that he had no beliefs. When he was on the point of dying he would allow no one to talk of God, and said as if he were speaking to himself, "Leave this corpse, it is good for nothing any more." He stole, lied and blasphemed, as well as being an atheist and a sodomite. He taught the latter vice, and used to sell young boys like horses, frequenting the pit of the opera house where he did

his bargaining. It is quite true that Madame was poisoned, but without Monsieur's knowledge. When those rascals were plotting to poison poor Madame, they discussed whether or not to warn Monsieur about it. The Chevalier de Lorraine said, "No, say nothing about it to him. He doesn't know how to hold his tongue, and even if he says nothing about it the first year he will hang us ten years afterwards." It is common knowledge that the wretches added: "Let us be very careful to say nothing about it to Monsieur because he would tell the King, who would hang us." They made Monsieur believe that the Dutch had given Madame a slow poison in a chocolate. It is evident, therefore, that that wicked Gordon woman had nothing to do with the affair, but it was she who calumniated Madame to Monsieur. She used to speak evil of her to everyone and did her every bad turn she could, and that is the truth.

The Chevalier de Lorraine was a sickly looking man because he had twice suffered from the French disease, but before that he looked very strong and was a handsome and well-built man. If his inside had been as good as his outside, I should never in my life have had anything bad to say of him. Maréchal de Turenne was a fine general and had great talent for fighting, but he cut a sorry figure at Court. D'Effiatt did not poison the chicory water, but only Madame's cup, which was cunning of him, as other people had drunk some of the chicory water, but no one else drinks out of our cups. The cup was not brought the instant it was asked for. They said it had been mislaid, because time was needed to clean it and put it through the fire. A footman I used to have who was also in the service of the late Madame (he is dead now) told me that in the morning, whilst Madame and Monsieur were at Mass, D'Effiatt came to the sideboard, took the cup and rubbed it with paper. The footman said to him, "What are you doing in my cupboard, sir, and why are you touching Madame's cup?" He replied, "I am very thirsty and was going to have a drink, but I saw that the cup was dirty and cleaned it with a bit of paper." That evening Madame asked for a drink of chicory water, and immediately she had drunk it she cried out that she had been poisoned. Those who were there drank the same water but no one tasted that which was in the cup, so they did not feel any bad effects. She had to be carried to bed,

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where she became more and more ill and died two hours after midnight in horrible agony.

Gossip about King Louis' mistresses.

16th July, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

In my opinion La Vallière was always deeply in love with the King. The Montespan loved him through ambition, Soubise through self-interest, and the Maintenon for both reasons. The Fontanges was also very much in love with him, but only after the fashion of a heroine of romance, because she was dreadfully sentimental. Ludre also loved him, but her love did not last long. As for Madame de Monaco, I wouldn't swear that she never slept with the King. It was whilst the King was in love with her that Lauzun fell into disgrace the first time. He had a regular, but secret, affair with his cousin, and forbade her to see the King. Once when she was sitting on the ground talking to the King, Lauzun, who in his capacity of Captain of the Guards, was present in the room, was so overcome with jealousy that he couldn't contain himself, and, pretending to pass them, trod so heavily on the hand which Madame de Monaco had spread on the ground that he almost broke it. The King, who had seen what he did, reprimanded him and Lauzun replied very cheekily. Thereupon he was sent to the Bastille. for the first time.

An epigram of Madame de Maintenon.

20th July, 1716.

I have often heard the Maintenon woman say jokingly, "I have been too far from and too near to greatness to know what it is."

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Monsieur and his cousins.

21st July, 1716.

At one time I was called *Sœur Pacifique* because I used to do my utmost to keep the peace between Monsieur and his cousin, the Grande Mademoiselle, as well as with the Grande-Duchesse.¹ They were always quarrelling like babies about the most trivial things. . . . The late Monsieur did not like hunting, and unless he was at the war he could never bring himself to mount a horse. His handwriting was so bad that he often used to bring me letters which he had written, saying laughingly, "You, Madame, are so accustomed to my writing. Just read me this because I do not know what I have written." We had many a good laugh about it.

Louis XIV. and Maria Mancini.

24th July, 1716.

Madame Colonna² is very clever, and the King was once so madly enamoured of her that if her uncle, the Cardinal, had agreed he would have married her. It was certainly very praiseworthy of Cardinal Mazarin to have refused to consent to the marriage. In other respects the Cardinal was an absolutely worthless fellow.

The Regent's bastard sons.

26th July, 1716.

The Chevalier d'Orléans is the son of the Sery woman who was one of my maids of honour. The Margrave of Anspach was also her lover. My son bought the position of General

¹ Daughters of Gaston d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIII.

² Maria Mancini, niece of Cardinal Mazarin, was the object of Louis XIV.'s earliest serious love affair, and the young king actually begged his mother to allow him to marry her. Instead, his marriage with the Infanta of Spain was arranged, and later Maria married Prince Colonna, High Constable of Naples, and never again saw King Louis.

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in charge of the galleys for the Chevalier, because he does not wish to have his bastards founding families, so he has made an abbot of one of his bastards whom he hasn't recognised, and who resembles Mademoiselle de Valois so closely that, if they were put beside each other, they could not be taken for anything but brother and sister. The Chevalier, however, does not look like any of them, neither his father nor his mother nor his sisters and brothers. I don't know where my son got him from. He is a good child and not lacking in intelligence. The abbot is eighteen years old and is the son of Florence, who was a very beautiful dancer at the opera. My son has a daughter of fourteen by the actress Desmares. Her mother is still playing every day.

Louis XIV. a stickler for etiquette.

4th August, 1716.

The King was so fond of the old customs of the Royal Household that nothing would have induced him to change any of them. Madame de Fiennes used to say that in the Royal Household they stuck so closely to these old customs and usages that the Queen of England died with a *toquet* on her head, that is a little bonnet which babies wear when they are put to bed. . . . When the King desired anything he would allow no one to reason with him. His orders must be obeyed immediately and without question. He was too much accustomed to "such is our good pleasure" to suffer any suggestions. He was very particular about the etiquette he had established in his household.

The informality of life at Marly.

11th August, 1716.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

At Marly the King allowed no ceremony at all. Neither ambassadors nor envoys were allowed to come thither, and he gave no audiences. There was no formality and everything went on as it liked. On his walks the King made

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the men wear their hats and in the drawing-room everyone down to the captains and the sub-lieutenants of the foot guards was allowed to sit down. This so disgusted me with the drawing-room that I never used to remain there.

The Regent's second daughter.

12th August, 1716.

Mademoiselle de Chartres¹ dances well and sings even better. She remains determined to become a nun, but I cannot persuade myself that she has any vocation for it, because her tastes are those of a boy. She loves dogs, horses, hunting and shooting. She fears nothing on earth and has no interest in the things women usually like. She takes no interest in her appearance, although she is not ugly and has a very good figure.

Louis XIV. and Madame Henrietta.

13th August, 1716.

Monsieur never reproached his wife on the subject of her affair with his brother, the King.² He told me the whole story of Madame, and he would not have passed that bit over in silence if he had believed in it. I think, therefore, that in this instance people were unjust to Madame. The whole affair would have been quite too horrible. The brother and the nephew, the father and the son together, that would have been dreadful.

¹ Louise-Adélaïde, Mademoiselle de Chartres.

² Court gossip accused Madame Henrietta of being unfaithful to her husband, and of having a love affair with her brother-in-law, the King. There was never any proof of this, however, and as Louis undoubtedly used the Duchesse d'Orléans as go-between in his dealings with her brother Charles II. of England, it is more probable that their secret understanding was a business one.

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Madame de Maintenon and her spies.

13th August, 1716.

The old woman had not much time for reading, because she had such a lot to do reading all the reports that were sent to her telling her everything that was happening in Paris and at the Court. Sometimes these packets were twenty or thirty sheets long. She used to show them to the King, at her own convenience, and according to whether she liked or disliked the people concerned.

An old story of Henry of Navarre.

13th August, 1716.

Henri IV. was warned one day that his mistress was unfaithful to him, and that the moment she thought she was safe from the King's coming to her room she used to receive the Duc de Bellegarde there. The King had her spied upon and went to visit her. Finding her in bed, complaining of a bad headache, he asked her for some supper. She said that she was so ill that she didn't want any supper and had ordered nothing but two partridges. The King replied that that would be enough, and that he would remain with her. Supper was served and proved to be very sumptuous, since it had been ordered for the entertainment of the Duc de Bellegarde. When the partridges arrived, the King took one, put it on a piece of bread and threw it underneath his mistress's bed. She, terrified, cried, "Sire, what are you doing?" "Eh, Madam," replied Henri, "doesn't everyone need food?"

Bellegarde was under the bed, where the mistress had hidden him as soon as she heard the King coming. Henri got up from the table after saying this, and went away and had a good laugh at the fright he had given the Duke and the Beauty.

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How Madame was treated by her old enemy.

17th August, 1716.

The old strumpet is not lacking in ability, and she talks very well when she chooses. She did not like people to give her the title of Marchioness, but preferred to be called simple Madame de Maintenon. She used to give vent to her hatred of me in every possible way, as for example when the Queen was at Marly and went out either walking or driving with the King. When they returned, the Queen and the Queen of England, the Dauphiness and the princesses accompanied the King, and I was the only one whom they sent away.

Madame recalls the death of the Duchesse de Bourgogne.

18th August, 1716.

The second Dauphiness was delicate and even sickly. Doctor Chirac maintained right up to the last that she would get better, and indeed she would be still alive if they had not let her get up while she still had measles, and was still sweating, and also if they had not bled her from her foot. Immediately after this bleeding she turned from being red as fire to being pale as death and she felt very ill. When they made her get out of bed, I exclaimed that they ought at least to wait until the sweating had stopped before they bled her. Chirac and Fagon persisted, however, and mocked at me, and the old slut came to me and said, "Do you think you are cleverer than all these doctors?" "No, Madam," I replied, "but one doesn't need to be very clever to know that nature must be followed, and since she is inclined to perspire it would be much better to allow her to go on as she is, instead of making a sick person in a sweat get up to be bled." She shrugged her shoulders and smiled contemptuously. I went to the other end of the room and said not another word.

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Madame's physician.

1st September, 1716.

My doctor is not a charlatan and does not like medicines, but my servants, who are greatly concerned and fear that my death will make them lose their charges, plague him to give me drugs.

The old bawd never forgave the King for not acknowledging her as Queen. She pretended to be so pious and meek before the Queen of England, that the Queen took her for a saint. The old thing knew very well that I am a German who has never, all her life, been able to tolerate a *mésalliance*, and she made up her mind that it was my fault that the King would not declare his marriage. Hence the hatred she bears me. As long as the Queen was alive she did not dislike me. Since the King's death, when she left Versailles, my son has never set eyes on the old strumpet for a moment.

Terrible accusations against Madame de Maintenon.

8th September, 1716.

The late King's mistresses did not tarnish his honour so much as the old bawd he married. She brought terrible trouble upon France. It was she who caused the Protestants to be persecuted, who made corn dear and brought about the famine. She aided the King's ministers to rob him, and the King's death lies at her door, because of the worry she caused him about the *Constitution*.¹ She arranged my son's marriage and would have liked to have put the Bastards upon the throne. In short, she caused ruin everywhere and threw everything into confusion. The King was often badly served by his ministers as well.

A disorderly woman.

16th September, 1716.

I have seen La Beauvais, the Queen's first lady-in-waiting. She was blind in one eye and lived for a few

¹ Unigenitus.

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years after my arrival in France. She it was who first taught the King how to behave with the ladies, and she was well versed in the subject because she had led a very disorderly life.

Madame will not interfere with the Government.

22nd September, 1716.

I tell you frankly why I do not meddle with anything. I am old and need rest and long for freedom from care. I do not wish to undertake what I am not capable of performing successfully, and I have never learnt to govern, nor do I understand anything about politics and the affairs of State, and I am too old to learn such difficult things. My son, God be thanked, is capable of managing things without my help. Moreover, it would make his wife and eldest daughter too jealous, and he likes them better than me. There would be continual quarrels which wouldn't please me at all. They pestered me, but I remained firm, and said that I wished to set a good example to my son's wife and daughter. This country has already, to its sorrow, been too much governed by women both young and old. It is high time that the men were allowed to have control. So I have made up my mind to meddle with nothing. In England it may be all right for women to rule, but in France, if things are to go well, it is essential that men alone should govern. What advantage would it be to me to be worried day and night? I only ask for peace and quiet. All my friends are dead, why should I put myself to any trouble? My life is nearly done. There is only enough of it left for me to prepare myself to die tranquilly, and it is difficult when one is engaged in important public affairs to keep a quiet conscience.

King Louis and his testament.

8th October, 1716.

The late King never thought that his will would be upheld. He said to several different people, "They wanted

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me to make my will and attend to some other matters. I did so for the sake of peace, but I know quite well that it won't be confirmed."

The unhappy Queen of France.

29th October, 1716.

We have had few Queens of France who have been entirely happy. Marie de Medicis died in exile. The mother of the King and Monsieur was miserable as long as her husband lived. Our own Queen, Marie-Thérèse, said on her death-bed that in all her life since she became Queen she had had only one really happy day. . . .

A Chancellor's ruse.

13th November, 1716.

A gentleman from the Palatinate, who had served for a long time in the Indies, used to tell how in the Court of one of those countries the Chief Minister and the Chancellor hated one another with a bitter hatred. One day the Chancellor wanted to use the Seals and could not find them in their casket. He was stricken with fear because his life and head were in jeopardy. He went to consult a friend whom he knew to be devoted to him, and asked him what he should do in the circumstances. The friend asked him if he had any enemies at the Court. "Yes," replied the Chancellor, "the Chief Minister is my bitter foe." "So much the better," replied the friend. "Go quickly and set fire to your house, snatch up the casket in which the seals are kept and take it quickly to the Chief Minister. It could not be left in better hands. Then return quickly to your house and save what you can. When the fire is extinguished go to the King and ask him to order the Chief Minister to return you the Seals. Arrange the affair so that it is done in the King's presence. If the Seals have been replaced in the casket all is well, if they aren't there, go for the Minister and accuse him of having stolen them. Thus you will both lose your enemy and recover the Seals." And in fact that is what happened, because the Seals were returned.

A philosopher and priests.

6th November, 1716.

TO MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

When people have lived and conducted themselves as well as you say that Liebnitz did, I do not believe that there is any need for them to have priests around them. They have nothing to learn from them because they know as much as the priests do, and to observe a custom does not necessarily lead to a real fear of God. Communion, when it is taken from habit only has no moral value, if at the same time the heart is devoid of worthy thoughts. I have no fear for Monsieur Leibnitz's salvation, and I think that he was fortunate in not having to suffer long.

The Regent interviews Madame de Maintenon.

10th November, 1716.

When my son remonstrated quite gently with the Maintenon woman for having slandered him, and advised her to consult her conscience, because she must know that what she was saying was wicked, she replied, "I spread that story because I believed it." My son replied, "Not so, for you could not have believed it, since you know the contrary." Thereupon she replied so insolently that I admired my son's patience. "But the Dauphiness is dead, isn't she?" "Couldn't she die without my help?" replied my son. "Did you expect her to be immortal?" She replied, "I was so overcome by her death that I detested the man they said was the cause of it." My son said to her, "But, Madame, you knew from the report that was given to the King that it had nothing to do with me, and that the Dauphiness was not poisoned at all." "That is true," she replied, "I will say no more about it."

Queen Christina of Sweden.

10th November, 1716.

The late King told me a story about Christina, Queen of Sweden. She never used to wear a nightcap but would tie up her head in a napkin. Once when she could not get to sleep she sent for music to be played by her bed. The concert was much to her liking and she suddenly stuck her head through the curtains and exclaimed, "*Mort diable*, how well they play!" The Italians and eunuchs were not of the bravest, and at the sight of her strange appearance they were so scared that they were stricken speechless and the concert had to be abandoned. In the great hall at Fontainebleau there can still be seen the blood of the man she had murdered there. She did not wish to have everything that he knew about her made known, and she thought that everything would leak out unless she took his life, since he had already become jealous and had begun to gossip because another had succeeded in supplanting him in her good graces. She was very revengeful and was addicted to all sorts of vicious behaviour, even with women. If she had not been so clever no one would have had to suffer. She owed her vices to some French people, and especially to old Bourdelot, who was physician to the great Condé, and encouraged her in all her irregularities. She could talk, moreover, of things that only the most practised debauchees could imagine, and she forced Madame de Brégy, who had not strength to defend herself, to the most disgraceful performances. The Queen was thought to be a hermaphrodite. The French who were with her at Stockholm were very depraved people, and it was they who introduced her to all her vices. Duke Frederick-Augustus of Brunswick was charmed with Christina, and he used to say that he had never in his life met any woman who was so clever and at the same time so amusing. He never used to find time hang heavily when he was with her. I said that I had heard that her conversation was very free, and he replied that that was true, but that she put things so cleverly that she didn't inspire disgust. The Queen was not popular with other women because she despised them all.

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An appreciation of Queen Marie-Thérèse.

10th November, 1716.

Our Queen was very simple-minded, but she was the best and most virtuous woman in the world. She had a certain nobility about her and knew very well how to hold court, and she believed everything, either good or bad, that the King told her. Her teeth were ugly, black and decayed, which people used to say was because she was always eating chocolate. She used to eat lots of garlic as well. She was short and stout and had beautiful skin, and when she was not walking or dancing she used to look fairly tall. She used to eat frequently and at length and took very small mouthfuls just like a little canary. There was no mistaking her country because she had too many Spanish mannerisms. Although she was very fond of gaming and used to play bassett, reversi and hombre and sometimes primero, she never used to win, because she had never learnt to play well.

An abbot who resembles a fox.

13th November, 1716.

Abbé Dubois behaves as if he thought that he and I were perfectly friendly, and however disagreeable I am to him, he turns my words into a joke. . . . I must give him his due, he is very capable, converses well, and is good company, but he is as false and self-interested as the devil. He resembles a young fox because his cunning shows in his eyes.

The young King, Louis XV.

1st December, 1716.

The young King has eyes as black as jet and what one might call a handsome look. His eyes look much gentler

than he really is, because he has a violent little temper. His vanity is already dreadful and he knows quite well what respect is.

A bedside quarrel.

11th December, 1716, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

They say that the Princess of Wales was almost on the point of expiring, because the English doctor was trying to prevent a German midwife from coming near the Princess, and while they were quarrelling, her life was in great danger. I should like to know whether there was any truth in this.

A disagreeable rumour from England.

15th December, 1716, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

They say that a widow,¹ one of the Queen of England's ladies-in-waiting, is pregnant through the Prince of Wales' fault. I beg of you, my dear Louisa, to tell me whether this is true or not. If there is any truth in the story, I pity the Princess with all my heart. Even though she may not show any jealousy, such an occurrence in her own house cannot be pleasant for her. All the English are queer people, and I should be extremely sorry for anything disagreeable to happen to the Princess.

¹ Mrs. Howard, afterwards Countess of Suffolk.

CHAPTER VIII

1717-1718.

A birth ceremonial.

15th January, 1717.

As soon as a child of the King's, called a Child of France, is born, he is wrapped in swaddling clothes and the ribbon of the order is put on him, but he is not made a chevalier of the order until after his first communion, and everything is done then with the usual ceremonial.

Madame laughs at her own ugliness.

16th January, 1717.

There can't be any uglier hands than mine in the world. The King often reproached me about them, and used to make me laugh heartily, because, since I have never in all my life been able to boast of having anything pretty about me, I made up my mind to laugh at my own ugliness, which was a very successful idea, as I often found reasons for laughter.

The character of Philip V. of Spain.

18th January, 1717.

The King of Spain is a good and peace-loving person, who speaks very little and is very fond of his wife. He hands over all his troubles to her and never worries himself about anything. . . . He is religious, but if he were not he would be very debauched, because he cannot do without women. That is why he is always so fond of his wives. The King is not fastidious enough to make any distinction. Provided that he has a woman in his bed he is quite happy.

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Prince Rupert and his black dog.

30th January, 1717.

I have heard it said that in England people looked upon my uncle—the late Prince Rupert—as a great sorcerer, and thought the great black dog, which was his companion, was the devil. When he was with the army and marched against the enemy, whole regiments used to flee before him for that reason.

Etiquette for chancellors' wives.

5th February, 1717.

Wives of chancellors here are only allowed stools in the morning at the toilet. After dinner they remain standing. This custom dates from the time of Queen Marie de Medicis, when there was a chancellor's wife who enjoyed great favour but had very bad feet. The Queen used to make her come to her room in the morning and allowed her to sit down. . . .

Cuckolds and Madame de Nesle's revenge.

9th February, 1717.

When the Marquis de Villequier, son of the Duc d'Aumont, paid a visit the other day to the Marquise de Nesle, it occurred to her to ask him if it were really true that he was in love with his wife. Villequier replied, "I am not in love with her and, in fact, I see very little of her, because our tastes are quite different. She is serious-minded and I am fond of gaiety and pleasure. I have a deep regard for her, founded on esteem, because she is one of the best women in France." Madame de Nesle, of whom one could not say as much, thought that the Marquis intended to insult her, and complained about him to Monsieur le Duc, who promised to avenge her. Accordingly, a few days later, he invited young Villequier to dinner at the Marquis de Nesle's house. The company also included Madame de Nesle, as well as

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the Marquis de Gèvres, Madame de Coligny and others. During the dinner Monsieur le Duc suddenly began to talk in the following strain: "Lots of people think they are quite safe from cuckoldom when they are not. I thought I had ensured my own safety because my wife married a monster, but it availed me nothing, since a certain wretched man called Du Challer who is uglier than I am has made me a cuckold. The Marquis de Gèvres there will never be one, because he is impotent and useless for marriage, but you (turning to Monsieur de Nesle) are made a cuckold of by such and such and such a one." Nesle did not believe him, although it was quite true. He began to laugh heartily, then turned to Villequier and asked, "And what about you, Villequier, do you think you are not one?" When he did not reply Monsieur le Duc remarked, "You are one through the Chevalier de Pesay." Villequier flushed, but contented himself with replying, "I confess that until this moment I didn't know, but, since you put me in such good company, I must take it in good part." I don't think Madame de Nesle had much of a revenge.

The fate of Charles I.'s widow.

4th March, 1717.

The Queen of England¹ contracted a secret marriage with her Lord in Waiting, who used to treat her very badly. Although the poor Queen had neither wood nor food, he used to have a large fire in his room and used to give great banquets. He was called Lord Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans. He never used to say a single kind word to the Queen.

The late King's favourites are ungrateful.

19th March, 1717.

I am annoyed when I consider how much evil has been spoken of the late King, and how little regretted His Majesty is by all those to whom he was kindest.

¹ Henrietta Maria, widow of Charles I. No proof of this marriage has been discovered.

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The Regent rewards Abbé Dubois.

23rd March, 1717.

My son has well rewarded his Abbé Dubois by giving him the position of Secretary to the King's Council, which the late Monsieur de Caillières used to hold. It carries a salary of 22,000 *livres*. He has also given him a place on the Regency Council for foreign affairs.

The visit of the Czar.

14th April, 1717.

To-day I received a fine visit from my hero, the Czar.¹ I thought his manners very good in the sense of being a plain and unaffected man. He is very sensible and speaks German badly, but can nevertheless make himself understood without trouble. He talks very well, is courteous to everyone, and is very well liked.²

Torcy reports Madame to her enemy.

1st June, 1717.

The Queen of Sicily³ once asked me whether I still accompanied the King on his outings as I used to in her days, and I replied with the following verse:—

“Cet heureux temps n'est plus, tout a changé de face
Depuis que dans ces lieux les dieux ont amené
La fille de Minos et de Pasiphaé.”

¹ Peter the Great.

² Other ladies did not, however, find him so courteous. He went to Saint-Cyr to have a look at the woman who for so long had been the power behind the French throne. Madame de Maintenon was in bed. He entered her room, drew the curtains of her window, and those of her bed: stood regarding her long and attentively, and finally left without having opened his mouth or saluting her in any manner whatsoever. His manner with the young king was delightfully affectionate and fatherly. He spoke of France with great emotion when he was leaving, and said that it grieved him to see that it would soon be ruined by luxury.

³ By the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1715, Sicily was ceded to the Duke of Savoy, with the title of King. Madame's step-daughter, Anne-Marie, became, therefore, Queen of Sicily.

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That Torcy fellow took this to the old bawd and made out that I was referring to her, which was in fact true. She was sulky with me for a long time about the affair.

Madame and Monsieur.

11th June, 1717.

I was very glad when the late Monsieur, after the birth of his daughter, betook himself to a separate bed, because I never liked the occupation of producing babies. When His Highness made the suggestion to me, I replied, "Yes, I shall be quite content, Monsieur, provided that you do not hate me and will continue to like me." He promised me and we were both very well pleased with each other. It was very trying to have to sleep with Monsieur. He couldn't endure being disturbed when he was asleep, so I used to have to lie so near the edge of the bed, that sometimes I fell out like a sack. I was therefore very glad when Monsieur, in a friendly manner and with no ill-feeling, proposed that we should sleep each in our separate rooms. . . . I only had a hundred silver *louis* for gaming until my mother's death, when Monsieur received the money from the Palatinate, and gave me double that.

One of King Louis' mistresses.

15th June, 1717.

Madame de Soubise was cunning, deceitful and very wicked. She deceived the poor Queen¹ shamefully, but the Queen paid her back finely, because she exposed all her deceptions and unmasked her, so to speak, before the whole world.

¹ Marie-Thérèse.

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The Regent's name for his wife.

21st June, 1717.

Madame d'Orléans is very proud and vain, and my son often jokingly calls her Madame Lucifer. . . . She has no difficulty in bringing herself to believe whatever flattery is addressed to her. . . . She is firmly convinced that my son prefers his daughter, the Duchesse de Berri, to herself. This daughter has no great affection for her mother.

The Regent is a patient man.

3rd August, 1717.

Every day I tell my son that he is too good-natured, but he just laughs and asks me whether it isn't better to be kind than spiteful. I don't know where he gets such a lot of patience from. Monsieur had none nor have I either.

La Vallière's real love for King Louis.

6th August, 1717.

When one of the Montespan woman's children died the King was really sorry, but he wasn't in the least upset at the death of the poor Comte de Vermandois,¹ because the Montespan and the old woman had made him believe that the boy was not his but Lauzun's, but it would be a good thing if all the King's bastards had been as certainly his as this one was. Madame de La Vallière was not a loose and flighty mistress, as she has well proved by her repentance and the penance she did as long as she lived. She was a very charming person, kind, gentle and affectionate. It was not ambition that made her love the King. She had a real love for himself, and she never loved anyone else except him all her life.

¹ Son of King Louis and Mademoiselle de la Vallière.

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Early days at the Court of Louis XIV.

10th August, 1717

In the days of the Queen and the first Dauphiness there was nothing but modest and dignified behaviour at Court. Those who were debauched in secret practised restraint in public, but when the old bawd set herself to govern, and brought all the bastards into the Royal household, everything became just the opposite.

The young King plays a spiteful trick.

14th August, 1717.

The young King¹ fell out of his bed yesterday morning, but a servant who saw him falling promptly threw himself on the ground so that the King fell on top of him and came to no harm. The King immediately hid himself under the bed, and out of spite remained for a few minutes without speaking, thus causing his servants much anxiety.

The Regent does not want to make Abbé Dubois a Cardinal.

17th August, 1717.

My son assures me positively that he has no intention of making Abbé Dubois a Cardinal,² and that the Abbé himself has no idea of any such thing. . . .

Madame de Maintenon would make a politician of Madame.

19th August, 1717.

Madame de Maintenon used to be always saying that it was shameful of me not to have any ambition and to take no interest in anything. I replied, "When a person has

¹ Louis XV.

² He became one, however, in 1722.

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plotted and schemed to become *Madame*, oughtn't her son at least to allow her to enjoy the rank in peace? Make up your mind that that is my case and leave me in peace." "You are obstinate," she said. "Not so, Madam," I replied, "but I love my repose and I regard your ambition as pure vanity." I thought the woman would have exploded out of her skin she was so annoyed. Then she continued, "But make an attempt, you will have help." I replied, "No, Madam, when I consider that you, who are a hundred times cleverer than I am, have not been able to keep yourself at the Court, which you are so fond of, what could I, a poor stranger, do, knowing nothing of intrigue and caring nothing for it?" She flew into a rage and said, "Get out, you are good for nothing."

Madame de Maintenon in retirement.

24th August, 1717.

The old strumpet remains in complete retirement, and no one can say that she interferes in the least with anything. This makes me think that the woman is hatching some plot in her head again, but I can't think what it can be.

Louis XV. institutes an Order.

2nd September, 1717.

The young King has lots of brains, to be sure, but he should try to talk more. He has invented an Order which he gives to the boys who play with him. It consists of a blue and white ribbon, from which hangs an oval piece of enamelled metal, on it there is a star and the model of a little pavilion which stands on the terrace where he plays.

Gambling ; and the Jesuits at Heidelberg.

9th September, 1717, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am sending you a description of the game of *Hocca*, and I will explain the rules to you. . . .

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Nowadays we play for very small stakes, such as ten *sous*, but when the late King was alive we always played with golden *louis*, and one day when the Archbishop of Rheims was following the boar hunt in a carriage and was holding the bank, he lost two thousand *louis* in half an hour, but it is unusual for the banker to lose. I am delighted that Heidelberg is being rebuilt and that they are also working at the castle, but I don't like to hear of a Jesuit convent being put up in the place where the commissariat used to be. Jesuits are quite out of place at Heidelberg, and so are Cordeliers. I have been told that they are living near the upper gate. *Mon Dieu*, how often have I eaten cherries with a good hunk of bread on the mountain side at five o'clock in the morning! I was gayer in those days than I am now.

Louis XIV. would have liked to make Madame Regent with her son.

11th September, 1717.

The King had a better opinion of my intellect than I deserved, and he was determined to make me Regent along with my son. Heaven be praised that such a thing didn't come to pass! I should have gone mad very soon.

Madame does not understand business.

19th September, 1717, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I never knew that you had compensation due to you from my son. Why have you kept quiet about it so long? It is quite natural for everyone to claim whatever may be due to him, but the difficulty is to pay all the debts of the late King. They add up to more than two hundred millions, and it will be some time before this sum can be found. You may be sure that when occasion arises I shall say as much as I can in your favour, but you are very sensible not to leave your interests in my hands, because no one in the world knows less of business than I.

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The Regent's Harlequin daughter.

23rd September, 1717.

My son has had a little daughter by the Desmares woman, and she would have liked to have had another of his children, but he replied, "No, this one is too like Harlequin."

She asked what he meant by that, and he replied, "It is made up of too many different pieces." I don't know whether he hasn't given her to the Elector of Bavaria, who also had to do with her, which cost him the most beautiful and magnificent snuff box you could imagine. It was studded with large diamonds.

The dowager Princesse de Conti builds herself a house.

23rd September, 1717.

The Prince de Conti's mother is having a house built a long way off from her son's. When they are on good terms she sends away the workmen, but when they quarrel she hurries up the work with added zest, with the result that the public can always tell on what sort of terms the Princess and her son are.

Parliamentary etiquette.

28th September, 1717.

Our Princes have no distinctive dress when they appear in Parliament. They simply wear mantles, which to my mind appear very plebeian, especially as they wear collars without cravats. The members of the Royal Family have no privileges above the other dukes who have seats in Parliament, except as regards seats and that they are allowed to cross the floor, which is forbidden everybody else. When the President speaks to them he takes off his hat, but when speaking to anyone else he keeps it on his head. This was the subject of a fierce quarrel between the Princes of the Blood

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and the Bastards. The Presidents of Parliament have long flame-coloured robes, which are lined with ermine around the neck. . . .

Louis XIV. and his Minister of War.

3rd October, 1717.

It is true that the King spoke harshly to Louvois, but it is not true that he attempted to strike him. The King was incapable of such action. Louvois was a cruel and insolent devil, but he served the King well and faithfully and better than others did, without, however, overlooking himself, since he feathered his own nest well. He made himself hated by everyone on account of his brutality and gross speech. He had no refinement and was a detestable man.

Louis' marriage foretold.

5th October, 1717.

The fact that the King married the old strumpet shows that we cannot escape our destiny. Long before he knew the Scarron woman, he said one day to Messieurs de Créqui and de La Rochefoucault, "There is nothing in astrology, because my horoscope has been drawn in Italy, and I am told that after I have lived a long life I am fated to fall in love with an old whore and love her until the end of my days. Does it look much like it?" and he laughed fit to make himself ill. Nevertheless, it happened thus.

The Regent's bastard children.

8th October, 1717.

The Abbé de Saint-Albin is very much upset because he has not been legitimatised. My son prefers the Sery woman's child to him, and won't recognise him because he is the son of Florence, who led a most irregular life. He is

afraid that people will mock at him if they see him recognising so many different children. Abbé Dubois is the sworn enemy of Saint-Albin, and has done a great deal towards preventing my son from recognising him. The Chevalier d'Orléans is very handsome but inclined to be satirical. He mimics everyone; in that he takes after his mother. . . .

A scandalous libel on the widow of James II.

8th October, 1717.

Queen Beatrice-Eleanor, wife of James II. of England, was too friendly with Madame de Maintenon for it to be credible that the late King was in love with her. I have seen a book called *L'ancien batard, protecteur du nouveau*, in which an affair of gallantry is described which this Queen is supposed to have had with Père de la Chaise, who was then a man of eighty years of age. . . . Nothing could be a more ridiculous stretch of the imagination than such a lampoon.

Lord Peterborough's arrest in Italy.

9th October, 1717, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

There is very little news, but I must tell you that the Pope has had Lord Peterborough arrested at Bologna. No one knows why. He went about for four days disguised as a woman. Although he has lots of brains, the fellow often acts like a lunatic. He was asked whether it is true that the King of England has given orders for the Chevalier de Saint-Georges to be murdered, and he replied that it was not, and that although King George would never give any such orders, the Prince of Wales would be quite capable of doing so.

Convents aren't at all fitting in our dear town of Heidelberg, and I see with regret that they are giving to the Capuchins the building in the suburb near the gardens. Here the Capuchins are called the Jesuits' lackeys, because

they always do everything the Jesuits want them to. The whole tribe of Jesuits is as much abhorred in Paris as in the Palatinate.

The origin of the King's debts; the Duc du Maine.

17th October, 1717.

The late King contracted many debts, because he would not give up any of his luxury. He also borrowed a great deal of money, and this led to enormous speculations on the part of business men and their courtiers, because when they lent a *son* to the King they wrote it down, in league with their accomplices, a *pistole*. Thanks to their rascality, on which there was no check, they grew rich, but the King and the country became poor. My son labours night and day to restore things to order, and gets no thanks from anyone. He has many enemies who launch all sorts of hideous threats against him and do everything in their power to make the people hate him, in which they succeed very easily, the more so because he is no prude. He is so disinterested that he has not touched the money which is his due as Regent. He has not taken a single *livre* of it, although he needs it badly because of his numerous children.

The young King is surrounded by people who are very badly disposed towards my son. One especially, although he is his brother-in-law,¹ but he is the most treacherous of hypocrites. He looks as if he would eat the images of all the saints, but he is nevertheless the wickedest man on earth. In the King's time, whenever he flattered anyone and spoke kindly to them, it was a sure sign that he had played them some nasty trick. He helped to have his mother sent away from the Court in order to please the old woman, and he was so determined that she should never reappear at Versailles that he had her belongings thrown out of the windows. You can easily imagine of what such a man is capable. I fear him like the Devil, on my son's account, and I don't think my son is sufficiently on his guard where he is concerned. The old woman has a mortal hatred for him. Whatever bad is said of that diabolical woman is still not as bad as the truth.

¹ The Duc du Maine.

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The Regent's character.

22nd October, 1717.

My son is neither handsome nor yet ugly, but his manners are not at all such as would make him popular. He is quite incapable of loving passionately and of being attached to the same person for long. On the other hand, his manners are not polite and seductive enough for him to expect to make himself loved. He is very indiscreet and tells everything that happens to him. I have told him a hundred times that I am very much surprised that women are so foolish as to run after him, they should rather flee from him. He begins to laugh and says, "You don't know the loose women of to-day. It gives them great pleasure to tell how I lay with them."

A snub for Saint-Simon; Lord Peterborough.

24th October, 1717, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . . In France and England the dukes and earls are so excessively proud that they imagine that they are superior to everyone else. If they were allowed to they would look upon themselves as superior to the Princes of the Blood, and yet most of them are not even really nobles. Once upon a time, I took down one of our Dukes very prettily. As he was taking his place at the King's table in front of the Prince de Deux-Ponts I said out loud, "Why is the Duke de Saint-Simon pushing the Prince de Deux-Ponts like that? Does he want to beg him to take one of his sons as a page?" Everyone began to laugh so heartily that he had to withdraw.

Lord Peterborough won't leave the prison until he has received reparation for the insult which was put upon him. Now if I were in prison, and they gave me permission to leave, I should get away as quickly as possible, and say what I wanted to say afterwards. But I should see that I got my liberty first. This nobleman is a very amusing

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eccentric. I expect he would rather die than refrain from saying anything that comes into his head and spiting people he doesn't like.

Madame's likes and dislikes; some distinctions of rank.

28th October, 1717.

As a matter of fact, I never eat any soup unless it is made of milk, beer or wine. I can't endure *bouillon*, and I become ill at once if there is a little of it in any of the dishes I eat, my body swells, I have colic, and I have to have myself bled. Black puddings and hams are soothing to my stomach. . . .

It was only because of my affection for her that I did not take precedence of the late Electress, but I made a great distinction between her and the Duchesse de Mecklembourg, and the Duchesse de Hanover who was here. I did not hesitate in their case. I did not want to go in front of her Highness, my mother, and I would even have liked to hold the train of her dress as I used to when I was a child, but she would not allow me to. . . .

When there was to be a great festivity, Monsieur used to make me put on *rouge*. I did it against my own inclination, because I have never liked ornamentation and I hate things which annoy me.

The great Condé.

29th October, 1717.

Abbé Perrault has founded a memorial in honour of the House of Condé, and has ordered that every year the funeral sermon on the Prince¹ shall be pronounced in the Jesuit Church where his heart is buried. I shall not relate how this prince won battles and how he showed himself very courageous in war and very timid at Court, because these things are known throughout the whole of France.

¹ Louis II., Prince de Condé.

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The Prince de Condé and the page ; an account of Louis XV.

13th November, 1717, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I wish you would learn to play chess. . . . The first Dauphiness had a page aged twelve or thirteen years . . . who was better than the best players. The late Prince played a game with him one day, and thought he was winning, but victory fell to the page. When the Prince saw that he was checkmated he flew into a rage, seized hold of his wig and hurled it at the head of the little boy. . . .

The Opera must have been Italian, because in Germany they only like Italian music. I can't endure it, it sounds like the noise made by cats caterwauling on the roofs.

I thank you for the silver medal you sent me. It comes very opportunely. I have Dr. Luther in gold and silver as well. In my opinion Luther would have done better not to have formed a separate Church, but to have contented himself with opposing the abuses of the Papacy. Much more good would have come of it. . . .

The little King has a pretty face and lots of common sense, but he is a naughty child. He isn't fond of anyone but his governess, and he takes dislikes to people without any reason and delights in saying things to hurt them. I am not in his good graces, but that doesn't worry me much, because by the time he is old enough to reign I shall be no longer in this world and will not be dependent on his capriciousness.

The Regent has a sore eye.

25th November, 1717, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

They put a powder into my son's bad eye which caused intolerable pain to a man who feels pain as much as he does. He must have been in agony. He bore no grudge, however, and laughed and amused himself as usual. Monsieur Gendron began to treat him for his eye, and it was getting

on well, but Gendron was too strict with him, and forbade his little suppers and what follows them, and this annoyed him as well as those who frequent these little suppers and find them profitable, so other remedies were suggested to him, which made his eye worse again.

Where Madame lived ; improvement in the Regent's sight.

27th November, 1717, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Saint-Cloud is only fit for a summer residence. Many members of my household have rooms without fireplaces, so they cannot spend the winter here, or I should be the cause of their deaths, and I am not cruel enough for that. Human suffering always fills me with compassion. If I had only myself to think of, I would rather spend the winter here than return to the Palais-Royal, where I am very cramped for room. I have only one warm room and a cabinet there, but one must conform to custom, and all my life I have done what was expedient rather than what appealed to me most. I do not dread or avoid either heat or cold. My son is like me in that he loves warm weather. It would have to be very hot indeed for us to complain of it and fall into a sweat.

My gout does not dispose me to see many people and crowds annoy me rather than please me. I prefer being left alone to having the worry of finding something to say to everyone, because the French don't like you not to speak to them, and go away discontented. . . .

The whole of England must have rejoiced greatly at the happy deliverance of the Princess of Wales, but the English are so deceitful that I wouldn't trust them with a hair of my head. The Duke of Schomberg must be very much vexed at having only a daughter, and the Comte de Degenfelt too, but they are both young enough to have many sons yet. The Princess of Wales has already three princes and three princesses.

The moment I could find time to spare I went to the Chapel to pray for my son, whose eye is a little better. He used not to be able to distinguish colours, and while I

was visiting him the Cardinal de Polignac came to see him, and my son saw the red of his robe quite plainly, so he must be considerably better. As long as he was under treatment he took care not to commit excesses in his eating, drinking and misconduct of all sorts, but I am afraid that after he is cured he will return to his disorderly life. The light ladies will begin to run after him again and will get him back to their little suppers. Then his eye will become inflamed again. After visiting my son I dined, then after dinner I took my Bible and read four chapters of the Book of Job, four Psalms, and two chapters of St. John. I left the other two until this morning.

In the days of the late King the pretensions of courtiers were quite a different matter from now. The King could be as generous as he liked, because he was the lord and master of his money, but my son is compelled to make economies because the debts are dreadful. They exceed the King's income by two hundred millions. That wretched old woman did everything she could to ruin the country. . . .

The Regent tries a new treatment for his eye.

28th November, 1717, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Six months ago, following a terrible blow that my son gave himself, on his face, one of his eyes became inflamed and bloodshot. He consulted an oculist, who suggested suitable remedies for it and he promised him particularly to be more sparing in his eating and drinking, etc., etc. but he couldn't make up his mind to do so and went on leading his usual sort of life. The state of the eye has become worse. My son tries everything that is suggested to him, but won't give up either his pleasures or his work, which involves much reading and writing. Yesterday he let himself be bled and purged, to-day he has tried a powder which a parson¹ gave him, and which he had obtained from a German. The powder has begun by causing a great

¹ Moussu, *Curé* of Rueil. Three days later the eye began to get a little better.

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deal of inflammation, and he has to use it two or three times. I am really afraid that he will end by losing his sight, and you can imagine into what a state of anxiety the idea throws me.

How letters are opened in the post; Madame expects to receive a visit from her daughter.

2nd December, 1717.

I am very glad that my letters have been sent on to you. Monsieur de Torcy is not at all friendly to me, and if he had a chance to hurt me he would not let it escape, but I don't worry about him. My son knows me well, and he knows how sincere my love for him is, so it would be difficult to make us quarrel.

It is no use sealing your letters with wax, because they have some stuff made with quicksilver and other substances which removes wax, and when the letters have been opened, read and copied, they seal them up again so skilfully that no one can tell whether they have been opened. My son knows how to make this stuff. It is called *gama*.

My daughter¹ flatters herself that she will be here on the tenth of February, but I don't expect she will. I am quite sure that her husband wants to make the trip, but he has a favourite, whose wife is his mistress. They strip him even to his shirt, and they will not allow him to undertake this excursion because they want to pocket the money which it would cost. (When self-interest governs nothing is certain.) I shall be very glad to see my daughter again, but long experience has taught me that those things which are most looked forward to in this world often turn out as badly as possible.

The badly brought up royal children.

9th December, 1717.

My daughter cannot have an armchair in my presence, or in that of my son or his wife. Nor can the Duc de

¹ Charlotte-Elizabeth, Duchess of Lorraine.

Lorraine have one where I am, but otherwise we will live without ceremony. My son's children have the rank of Princes of the Blood, and the Duc de Chartres is the first Prince of the Blood. All these princes and princesses have been very badly brought up, and have always been allowed to have their own way. Madame d'Orléans never gave a moment's thought to her children. Her son alone had the good fortune to have a good governor, so that he was brought up in a suitable Christian manner. It is a fact that never in my life have I seen any sons of princes or even sons of nobles so badly brought up as these children. Yet they had the same governess as my daughter used to have, and she, thank God, was not brought up in like manner. I asked her once why she did not give my grandchildren the same education that she gave my daughter, and she replied :—

“When I had complaints to make to you, Madame, you always upheld me, but when I complain to Madame d'Orléans she does nothing but laugh at me. So, seeing this, I let things go their own way.”

Why Louis XIV. gave up the conquest of Holland.

10th December, 1717.

It is written that when the King was in Holland he gave up its conquest out of generosity, but I know as surely as I know my own name that he came home simply and solely because he wanted to see Madame de Montespan again and be near her. I know many other cases in history where events have been attributed to great motives of politics and ambition which were really caused by the merest trifles. They say of our king that he was so ambitious that he wished to be absolute monarch of the whole world, and that was the reason why he began the war with Holland, but I am quite positive that that war was only entered into because Monsieur de Lionne, who was then Secretary of State, was jealous of Prince William of Furstenberg who had a love affair with his wife, of which he was cognisant. It was in order to drive him away that he began the quarrels which led to a war.

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The drinking abilities of ladies.

12th December, 1717.

Madame de Montespan and her eldest daughter¹ could drink a great deal without becoming in the least drunk. I have seen them swallow in one day many bumpers of the strongest rosoli from Turin, not counting what they had already drunk. I thought they would fall under the table, but as far as they were concerned it might have been water.

The Regent's bad companions; the illness of Lord Stair; the Princess of Wales leaves Saint-James.

23rd December, 1717, Paris.

My son's eye is neither better nor worse, and the parson has good hopes of his recovery. It is the result of a blow which he gave himself about eighteen months ago playing tennis. He is incapable of dieting himself for more than two or three days, and drinking a great deal is bad for the eyes. The women here drink even more than the men, and, this is between ourselves, my son has an accursed mistress who drinks like a fish, and is unfaithful to him, but, since she never asks him for anything, he is not jealous of her. I am terrified lest he gets something worse with all these goings-on. Heaven preserve him! He spends whole nights in that wicked society, and stays at the table until three or four o'clock in the morning, which is undoubtedly very bad for his health. I pray God very earnestly for his conversion. He has no other faults but this sort, which are, however, bad ones.

Lord Stair has been ill, and almost at death's door, but to-day he is much better. His wife has acquired much merit by the care she took of him. She never left him day or night. I don't know how she managed it. You are

¹ The Regent's wife.

quite right, my dear Louisa, in singing her praises. My dear Princess of Wales fills me with so much pity that yesterday I wept for her. Her departure from Saint-James, as the Countess of Buckingham described it to me, was really heartrending. She swooned away time after time when the three little princes, all weeping, took leave of her. That touched me greatly. . . .

CHAPTER IX

1718-1719.

The Regent's anxiety and hard work.

2nd January, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

My son is so occupied with internal affairs of State that Monsieur Zachmann was not able to obtain an audience. The whole of Brittany is on the point of rising and they are sending troops there. My son is much to be pitied, because he has a great deal to worry him. From six o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock at night he is at work, and there is no chance of speaking to him. After that he gives the little suppers I have told you about, to distract himself a little.

Madame loses many letters in the post.

6th January, 1718.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It does me no harm to write, and I should have to be quite dead before that would happen. Never a single day passes without my doing some writing. Many letters are lost between here and England, and four of mine have never reached the Princess of Wales, so you need not be surprised, my dear Louisa, if the letter you wrote to the Countess of Buckingham has gone astray. Abbé Dubois left for England after Christmas. . . .

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The wicked English ; terrible times in France.

13th January, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . I am very sorry about what is happening at Saint-James and I am afraid things will go from bad to worse. No one will know anything you say to me on this subject. The English have always been a wicked race, but since their King William they have become worse and fallen into very vicious ways. It has been noticed that islanders are always more treacherous and wicked than the inhabitants of the *terra firma*.

We have more need than ever of God's help, because these are terrible times for our people. Nothing is talked about but quarrels, thefts, murders, and vices of all sorts. That old serpent, the Devil, has been freed from his chains and rules over the air, so it behoves all good Christians to betake themselves to prayer.

George I. and his son.

3rd February, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

My latest letters from England are dated 16th January. Everything was in a sad state there. At Paris they are saying that the refugees have done all they could to stir up the King and the Prince of Wales, one against the other, in the hope that a Regent would be appointed by Parliament, and that thus they would escape from the authority of the Prince. That appears quite likely, but it seems to me that the father and son must understand their scheming and realise from it that they would do well to stand together, lest greater disasters arise. There is no excuse in the world for a son to refuse to be in submission to his father, especially when that father is a King. I don't think there has ever been very much affection between them. My dear Electress used to say it was the son's fault. Abbé Dubois has fallen ill in England . . .

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George I.'s harsh treatment of the Princess of Wales.

10th February, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The King of England, if I may say so, is treating the Princess of Wales too harshly. She has done nothing to justify his forbidding her to see the children whom she loves so tenderly. How could they be better brought up than with a mother so sensible and virtuous? In my opinion he is quite wrong.

The vicious house of Condé ; an unlucky name.

13th February, 1718.

We hope that my daughter and her husband will arrive here next Friday. I am looking forward to it greatly, but God grant that the visit pass off without any unpleasantness ! I dread the bad company with which my daughter will be forced to mix, and that will do its best to spoil her. There may be some vexatious results, because the Duc de Lorraine is not indifferent with regard to his honour, and would not understand raillery if they invent some story about my daughter. If I undertake to guide her on this point I shall be considered a spoil-sport and a bad-tempered person, and no one will be in the least grateful to me. The debauchery of the house of Condé is far too horrible and public. What is most astonishing is that they have in their grandmother the most virtuous and estimable woman in Christendom. The most hardened liars have never found anything to say about Madame la Princesse, but all her descendants, married or single, have the worst possible reputation. One blushes to hear the stories told about them and what is said in songs. . . .

My daughter has excellent principles, but she has a gay nature and is very fond of her sister-in-law, who, between ourselves, inherits a little of the falseness and malice of her mother. So it is natural that my satisfaction should be mixed with anxiety. I understand why Mademoiselle de Degenfeldt has not the name of Caroline. There are few

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families where there are not similar ideas as to lucky and unlucky names. In the Royal Family no Henry has died a natural death, they have all finished prematurely and tragically.

How the Queen of Spain ruled her husband.

18th February, 1718.

It is true that the Queen of Spain was at first extremely fond of the Princesse des Ursins, and that she was desperate when that lady was dismissed the first time. What they say about the Confessor is also true, except for one thing, which is that the Duc de Grammont, who was formerly ambassador at Madrid, spoke in the same manner as the Confessor and was dismissed for that reason. The Queen had an effective way of obtaining all she wanted from the King of Spain. The dear King was a great lover of women, so the Queen could make him do what she liked. She had in her room a bed on wheels, and if the King would not do what she wanted, she moved her bed away from his. When, however, he had consented to grant what she wanted she would allow him to come into her bed, which was for the King the greatest of pleasures. The King's confessor was, not long ago, sent out of Spain, but as soon as Madame des Ursins was dismissed the King recalled the Confessor from Rome, and he has him with him now.

Madame's daughter and son-in-law arrive.

20th February, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

My children have arrived from Lorraine, and my daughter was beside herself with joy. I didn't find her much changed, but her husband is horribly so. He used to have the most beautiful colour, but now his complexion is a brownish red, and he is stouter than my son. I may tell you that my children are as fat as I am.

My daughter is gay and happy, but her husband has a

preoccupied air. Yesterday she had a sharp attack of fever. Heaven grant that it is not the beginning of small pox, because neither the Duc de Lorraine nor my son have had it, and the Duc would be sure to come to visit his wife. Three of his brothers have already died of this terrible disease. So I am anxious about it. I will write to you on Wednesday and tell you what it is.

How a suitor was put off.

23rd February, 1718.

Once upon a time they wanted to marry me to the Duc du Courlande. My aunt, the Abbess d'Herford, was eager for the marriage. He was in love with Princesse Marianne, daughter of Duc Ulric de Wurtemberg, but his father and mother would not let him marry the princess because they intended him to marry me. When he returned from France, I talked to him in such a fashion one day as I walked with him at Heidelberg, that he would hear no further talk of the marriage, and decided to go and join the army. . . .

A Princess unforgiven.

24th February, 1718.

TO MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

The poor Princess¹ fills me with real pity. According to her letter of the 3rd of this month, she and her husband have thrice asked forgiveness of the King as they would of God, but they have not been able to obtain it. I cannot understand such behaviour. I am afraid the Prince may share the misfortunes of his mother, but it seems to me that if the King recognises this prince as his son, he ought also to treat him as a son and not deal so sternly with the Princess who has never in her life done anything against him, but has always honoured and loved him like a father. From what I can see, I don't think anything good can come of all this, because there is too much ill feeling, but the King

¹ Of Wales.



GEORGE I. OF ENGLAND,
WITH THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.

LETTERS OF MADAME

would do well to put an end to such a state of affairs, as it gives rise to a hundred impertinent sayings, and that recalls wretched old stories that it would be better to leave entirely forgotten.¹

A description of the Duc de Lorraine's mistress.

1st March, 1718.

The trip that the Duc de Lorraine took to Paris cost him a hundred thousand crowns. . . . It cannot be denied that his mistress, the Craon woman, is a very charming person, although she is not a talented beauty. She has a beautiful figure, a lovely skin and pretty colouring. She is very fair, but her best points are her mouth and teeth. Her eyes are not very beautiful. She has a nice expression and modest air, which is attractive. She has treated the Duke from first to last as if she were Duchesse de Lorraine, and he Monsieur de Luneville. She laughs charmingly, and behaves to my daughter with great politeness and consideration. If her conduct were as blameless in other ways, there would be nothing to say against her.

A joke against the Prince de Conti.

4th March, 1718.

At one of the most recent balls this winter someone took a hunchback and dressed him up like the Prince de Conti, and put him sitting beside him. The Prince asked him, "Who are you, mask?" and he replied, "I am the Prince de Conti."

The Prince, without losing his temper, took off his mask, began to laugh, and said, "See how we deceive ourselves. For more than twenty years I have been thinking that I was." He wasn't at all angry, which is unusual.

¹ Sophia-Dorothea, wife of George I., was suspected of infidelity to him and was kept prisoner for the rest of her life. George I. always disliked the Prince of Wales and probably thought that he was really the son of his wife's paramour.

George I.'s hatred of his son and daughter-in-law.

6th March, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The news from England is no better, and the poor Princess is much to be pitied. There must be something behind all this that is not known. At Paris, where they are fond of romancing, they say the reason the King hates his son and the Princess of Wales is that he himself is enamoured of the Princess and that she will not listen to him. I don't believe a word of it, as I look upon the King as not being of an amorous nature. He cares for no one but himself and his own greatness. These quarrels will give rise to new factions.

The Duchesse de Lorraine's visit ends ; George I.

10th March, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

My children from Lorraine depart in three days, and I am heart-broken at the thought. My daughter would have liked to have stayed longer, but the Duke wished to return. My daughter's good principles are so firmly rooted, thank God, that she has been able to mix in every sort of society here without any danger of becoming smirched. But nothing like the young people of to-day has ever been seen, they make one's hair stand on end. . . .

The Princess of Wales told me the story of that young man of eighteen that the King of England had assassinated. He never showed the least embarrassment, but appeared, indeed, to think that he had done a very fine thing. I am afraid this King will come to a bad end. His quarrel with his son gets more bitter every day. I always thought of him rather hard when he was in Germany, and the air of England must have hardened him still more. When he was here I told him to his face that he was too reserved and gloomy. I have never in my life seen him look pleasant. He was polite, but his manner was very frigid ; everyone here, wise as well as foolish, blames him for his behaviour to his only son.

George I. and the Duchess of Munster.

17th March, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Everything goes from bad to worse in England. It is not safe to write anything about it. All Paris says that King George wants to declare publicly that the Prince of Wales is not his son, and that, in order to spite him still further, he wants to marry the Schulemberg woman who is now Duchess of Munster. I told Lord Stair all this, and he replied that nothing of the sort would happen, and that I had no need to alarm myself.

Madame does not like her own reflection.

24th March, 1718.

Once upon a time I made the Comtesse de Soissons laugh heartily. She asked me, "Why is it, Madame, that you never look at yourself when you pass in front of a mirror as everyone else does here?" I replied, "It is because I have too much self-respect to enjoy looking at myself, since I am so ugly."

George I. untouched by an appeal.

24th March, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The Princess of Wales tells me that the Duchess of Shrewsbury threw herself at the King's feet to implore him to spare her brother, who has been condemned to be hung. The King replied that if he showed mercy all the English would be furious because it would be said that he was spared because he is a foreigner, and that if he had been English he would have been hung without pity. He well deserves to hang, but I am sorry for his sister.

The Prince of Wales refuses to join his father's enemies.

27th March, 1718.

My daughter has postponed her departure until Wednesday. That day will come very soon, because what hurts us always happens more quickly and surely than what gives us pleasure. The King owes the Duke a lot of money, and on account of this debt he has been given a hundred thousand francs to pay the expenses of his trip.

The Prince of Wales has performed a fine action, and if the King of England is not touched by it, nothing will ever restore harmony between them. Some people came to ask the Prince to put himself at the head of their party, and he replied that never in his life would he join any party against his father and his King.

*An untrue impression of Elizabeth of Bohemia given
by historians.*

31st March, 1718, Paris.

Historians often tell lies. They tell a story about my grandfather, the King of Bohemia, to the effect that my grandmother, the Queen of Bohemia,¹ inspired by ambition, never gave her husband a moment's peace until he was declared King. There is not a single word of truth in that. The Queen used to think of nothing but seeing comedies and ballets and reading romances. . . .

. . . There is no more news. They say that a man here who was going to beat his wife, who had displeased him, offered up the following prayer: "Dear God, grant the whipping I am going to give this your handmaid may correct her and make her good."

¹ Elizabeth, daughter of James I. of England.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Mademoiselle de Fontanges.

8th April, 1718.

The Fontanges¹ was a stupid little thing, but she was good-hearted and as beautiful as an angel. While the King was in love with her I had to spend a lot of time with him, because she was very fond of me.

The Château de Villers-Cotterets.

10th April, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

My daughter and her husband left the day before yesterday at nine o'clock, and my daughter has written to me from Villers-Cotterets, where they slept. It is sixteen leagues from Paris, and there is a beautiful castle there belonging to my son. I was often there with Monsieur. It is set in the midst of a beautiful forest, and its only drawback is that the water there is not good. The late King came there to meet me when I arrived in France.

A life-long friendship.

1st May, 1718, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Madame de Ratzenhausen has the good fortune to be popular with the greatest nobles. The King himself liked to see her, because she used to make him laugh, and she also used to amuse the Dauphiness very much. Madame de Berri was fond of her, and often sent for her to visit her. It is not surprising that we are friends. We have been together since our infancy, and we have known each other since I was only nine years old. Amongst a hundred old women you will not find one who has retained so much of her gaiety as Lenore.

¹ Mademoiselle de Fontanges was only Louis XIV.'s mistress for a couple of years and died in 1681. Her child by Louis died.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Death of Mary of Modena.

8th May, 1718, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I write to you with a sorely-troubled heart, and I wept all yesterday morning. The good and pious Queen of England¹ died at seven o'clock yesterday morning at Saint-Germain. There is no doubt that she will go to Heaven. She kept not a penny for herself and gave everything she had to the poor. She supplied whole families with the means of livelihood and never had an evil thought about anything whatsoever. If people began to gossip to her about their neighbours she used to say, "If it is anything nasty about anyone, I beg of you not to tell me." She bore her troubles with perfect resignation. She was courteous and pleasant, although far from beautiful, and she was always cheerful and constantly praised the Princess of Wales. I was very fond of her and her death grieves me to the heart.

An appreciation of Queen Mary; love charms.

29th May, 1718, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The Queen (of England) was perfectly content to die, and she thanked God for delivering her from this world. I agree with you that she should be regarded as a saint, rather than her husband, but I should think that he too is in Heaven. He bore his troubles with great resignation. The Queen had a fine courage and truly royal qualities. She was very generous, courteous and tactful. She always used to tease me about my passion for going to the play, and she used to tell laughingly how there was once a time when she could no longer go out because her horses had died and she had no money to buy others, but she never complained of her misfortune. She was very thin, but

¹ Widow of James II.

rather as to her body than her face, which was very long. Her eyes were intelligent, her teeth large and white, her complexion was pale which showed all the more because she had given up rouge. She was good-looking and was always very neat. My son, out of compassion for her poor servants, will allow many of them to retain their pensions. . . .

It is a pity that the House of Schomberg should die out. They were fine people. I think it is quite good that the Comte de Degenfeldt should still be in love with his wife. Few matches can stand a year's trial, and there is a proverb here which says that if a newly-married couple pass a whole year without either regretting the marriage, they are entitled to a vine belonging to the Archbishop of Paris. Thus, when a newly-espoused couple are seen quarrelling, people say, "They will not have the Archbishop's vine."

The La Force¹ woman is a very romantic personage, or she would not have disguised herself as a bear. She has had many adventures. People are inclined to look upon her as a bit of a sorceress, but I don't believe any of that. I was told that a gentleman of the house of Mailly, who was one of my particular friends, but died long ago, had been desperately in love with her and thought he would die if she did not marry him. But since she had a bad reputation and was extremely poor his father would not consent to the match, and begged the Prince to make him listen to reason. They took him to Chantilly, and the whole house of Condé and Conti began to exhort him to obey his father. He fled like one distraught into the gardens and tried to drown himself. As he tore off his garments, before throwing himself into the water, he broke a ribbon to which was attached a sachet that La Force had given him on the grounds of his health, and had asked him never to take off. The moment it was no longer on his person he became quite changed and found himself quite indifferent to La Force. He went to find the Prince and told him what had happened, saying that he had been bewitched. I laughed heartily at this story.

¹ Charlotte-Rose Caumont de La Force, died in 1724 at the age of seventy-four.

LETTERS OF MADAME

The Duchesse de Longueville's boredom in the country.

31st May, 1718.

My son does not like the country at all ; he only cares for town life. In that he is like Madame de Longueville, who used to be extremely bored in Normandy where her husband lived. The people round her used to say to her, "Good Heavens, Madam, how bored you are ! Is there nothing to amuse you ? There are the dogs and beautiful woods, don't you like hunting ?" "No," she replied, "I don't like hunting." "Do you like needlework ?" "No, I don't like needlework." "Won't you go for a walk, or play some game ?" "No, I hate them both." "What do you like, then ?" they asked her, and she replied, "I don't know what to say. I have no use for innocent pleasures."

The louis changes its value.

2nd June, 1718, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

There is no news unless it be that my son came in this afternoon and brought us the decree which modifies the value of the coinage.

The *louis d'or* used to be worth thirty-six livres. Those who have lots of money will profit finely. I am not of that number, because it is a long time now since wealth and I parted company.

You ask whether foreigners belonging to the Lutheran faith can obtain military employment here. They are never taken anywhere, except perhaps in the Alsatian Regiment and in the Swiss Guards.

Madame lays the corner-stone of a church.

9th June, 1718, Saint-Cloud.

I returned last night at ten o'clock from Paris, where I had gone at eleven in the morning to take part in a long

and boring ceremony at a convent called l'Abbaye-aux-Bois. It was a matter of laying the first stone of a church which is being built. I was met with drums, fifes and trumpets and had to go a long way. It quite put me out of countenance. You can't imagine what a large crowd had collected. After Mass, which was accompanied by very fine music, we went to the place where the foundations had been hollowed out. The priests sang psalms and chanted prayers in Latin, of which I understood not a word. I was under a canopy in a place covered with carpet and I had an armchair. As soon as I was seated, they brought me the stone, on which my name was engraved and in the middle of which was my medal. Some mortar was thrown on to it which nearly smothered me, then they placed another stone on top on which I had to bestow my blessing. I confess that the thought of it made me laugh. I then sent the head of my household, Monsieur de Montagne, my Lord-in-waiting, to place the stone, since I could not go up and down the steps. The ceremony lasted an hour and a half. Afterwards there was a great deal of music and it all finished with a *Te Deum*.

I went from there to the Palais-Royal. It was dreadfully hot. There I dined with my son and three of his daughters, then I went to the Luxembourg to call on Madame de Berri. I was so tired that immediately I found myself in a cool room I fell asleep like a dormouse. I was very much taken aback when I woke up, but the thing was done. At five o'clock I returned to the Palais-Royal and I went with Madame d'Orléans to the theatre to see a new actor making his first appearance. He was playing *Oreste* in *Andromaque*. My son joined us during the fourth act. As a curtain-raiser they gave the *Vendanges de Suresne*. This would be an amusing play if one had not seen it a hundred times. The heat was so great that I melted into water. . . .

King Louis' courage in face of death.

15th June, 1718.

The King showed by his death that he was really great. No one could have died with greater firmness and courage

than he did. For a week he lay with death staring him in the face without ever showing any fear or alarm, and he arranged everything as if it were only a matter of going on a journey.

Tempests and sorcerers.

30th June, 1718, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The weather was beautiful the whole of the last week, but this evening there has been rain and hail. Speaking of hail, it has ruined seven villages in Lorraine, and has destroyed everything in several districts. There were hailstones which weighed two pounds. My daughter tells me that these disasters are blamed on sorcerers, who are supposed to have the power of assembling the clouds and letting hail fall wherever it pleases them. At Paris no one believes in sorcerers and one never hears them mentioned, but at Rouen people thoroughly believe in them and one hears them talked of everywhere.

A cure for an eccentric husband.

2nd July, 1718.

The young Princesse de Conti is certain to make herself liked when she wants to. Her manners are very pleasant and she is gentle and good-tempered and always says something agreeable. . . . She is tired of the folly of her husband, and has placed guns and swords beside her bed, and she assures him that whenever he turns up with his pistols loaded she will fire off a gun and if that misses him she will await his approach with a sword in her hand. Since then he has never again had recourse to his pistols.

LETTERS OF MADAME

The late Queen of England's financial circumstances discussed.

19th September, 1718.

It is quite untrue that the Queen of England has left a lot of money. She supported her son as well as all his household, she gave pensions to most of her ladies and succoured entire families of English. She deprived herself of necessities in order to help the poor in the hospitals.

As far as niggardliness is concerned she was not at all Italian, because she never put away a single penny. One might say that she had all the royal virtues. Her only fault (and no one is perfect) was that she carried her religion to extremes, but she paid dearly for that, because it was the cause of all her troubles. She could not economise here, as she was not paid regularly, and she was forced to borrow money and contract debts. Nor is it true that her servants stole her furniture, because she was lodged at Saint-Germain with the King's furniture.

There have been very few Queens of England who have been happy, and in that country the Kings have not had much luck either.

A book published against the Regent.

27th September, 1718.

Abbé Dubois is the image of a fox crouching on the ground as it stalks a hen.

Malézieux and Cardinal de Polignac worked as hard as the Duchesse du Maine at the reply to Fitz-Moritz's book¹ . . .

My son is compelled to put up with his relations, but if I had as many hundred-crown pieces as he has reasons for repenting of having allied himself with all that lot, I should be able to ask the King to sell me France, pay him on the spot, and discharge all his debts.

¹ The *Lettres de Monsieur Fitz-Moritz sur les affaires du temps*, by Abbé Margon, Amsterdam, 1718, were written in defence of the rights of the Orleans branch to the throne of France as against the claims of the Spanish branch. The reply mentioned by Madame was *Conferences d'un Anglais et d'un Allemand sur les Lettres de Fitz-Moritz*.

LETTERS OF MADAME

A feminine artifice.

28th September, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The Maréchal de Tessé is very much devoted to Spain, as are all the marshals, who are creatures of the old woman. All French people like Paris better than any other place. I am fond of the Parisians, but I don't like living in their town . . .

It is quite true that some women have had their veins painted blue in order to make believe that they have such a fine skin that the veins show through.

Ladies and affairs of State.

1st October, 1718.

The King was not superstitious except in regard to religious matters, such as the miracles of the Mother of God, and such things. . . . In his days ladies were taught not to discuss affairs of State. It was not done.

Madame's grand-daughter takes the veil.

9th October, 1718.

The poor Mademoiselle d'Orléans determined to become a nun, simply because of the lack of affection shown her by her mother and her fear lest she should be tormented to make her marry the eldest son of the Duc du Maine. She preferred to retire from the world rather than run the risk of incurring her mother's hatred. She has a very bad mother, God knows, but remarks like that must not be entrusted to the post.

Madame de Dangeau has no need to be afraid that I shall go and dine with her. For ten years it has only happened to me once to dine at anyone's house, and that was at Madame de Ventadour's. The fact is that Madame de Dangeau is very shy and does not want to go into society

much. Mademoiselle de Valois was not at all to her taste and she does not want to see any member of the Royal Family except perhaps myself. She avoids the Duchesse de Berri as much as she does her sister. . . . I have often regretted that she is not a duchess, and when I see so many duchesses sitting down it hurts me to see standing Madame de Dangeau, who belongs to such a fine noble family.

I will speak to my son about Colonel Schwartz, but I am afraid it will be useless. Money is a very scarce thing at this Court, and it is as difficult to find a thousand pounds as it was to find twice that amount in the days of the late King. The finances are in a deplorable state, and it can be said with truth that our King is a poor King.

An account of the Duchesse du Maine, and a trick played by the Duc de Bourbon-Condé.

11th October, 1718.

Madame du Maine is no taller than a child of ten years. When she shuts her mouth she is not at all ugly, but she has horrible irregular teeth. She is not too stout, and puts on a dreadful amount of rouge. Her eyes are pretty and she is fair and white. If she were as good as she is pretty there would be nothing to say against her, but her wickedness is intolerable. . . . She is quiet the whole day, which she passes playing cards, but as soon as the day is over she begins her tantrums and extravagances. She torments her husband, her children and her servants to such an extent that they don't know where to turn.

The Polignac woman made Monsieur le Duc believe that she loved him. He, knowing well the way she carried on, caused her to be spied upon and discovered that she had a secret affair with the Chevalier de Bavière. He accused her of it, and she denied the affair. Monsieur le Duc warned her not to imagine that she could deceive him, and she swore that he was misinformed, but as soon as he left her, she betook herself to the Chevalier's house. Monsieur le Duc, who had followed her, heard about it immediately. Next day, he made an assignation with her at his own place. She went to him in his bedroom, thinking that he

LETTERS OF MADAME

knew nothing. However, Monsieur le Duc opened the door wide, so that everyone in the cabinet, which was full of men, could see her, and calling the Chevalier de Bavière said to him, "Sir, come and take your lady-love, she will not have so far to go to find you."

Although Monsieur le Duc and the Prince de Conti are brothers-in-law twice over, they have never been able to endure each other.

Some members of the Royal circle.

14th October, 1718.

The Princesse (de Conti) is very small and is deformed, without, however, being quite hunchbacked. She has beautiful eyes like her father, but otherwise she is not at all pretty, but she is very virtuous and pious.

My son likes the Comte de Toulouse and finds him very sensible in every way, and if the Duc du Maine had followed his brother's advice, what has happened to him now would not have occurred. Unfortunately for him, he preferred to act according to his wife's advice.

Madame du Maine is not a beauty but she is very clever, and well read, and can talk on all sorts of subjects so that all the scholars are attracted to her. She knows how to flatter all the discontented and stirs them up against my son. She is lord and master of her husband. He has many charges in his gift and can give places to many people in the Regiment of Guards of which he is General, in the Artillery, of which is he Grand Master, and in the Carabineers, all of whose officers he appoints, and he has his own regiment as well. By this means he can rally many people round himself.

The Regent lives in jeopardy.

15th October, 1718.

The affair of the Duc du Maine is not a thing which can be forgotten, at least not as long as the two old wretches

are alive, because they egg on the Duc du Maine and his little devil of a wife to plot all sorts of things against my son. The Princesse des Ursins has at least this much good about her that she doesn't mix God up in her schemes. My son lives in jeopardy, and that worries me greatly. I strive my best to resign myself to the Divine will and to accept all that it decrees, but the heart of a mother is very tender where an only son is concerned.

The hearts of lions, tigers and all sorts of ferocious beasts are easier to soften than those of wicked people, especially when ambition and greed are the cause of their enmity. All the wiseacres do not know in what a deplorable state my son found the kingdom; when a change comes, everyone imagines that he will become rich. They praise whoever is in power and expect miracles of him, but when these don't happen, because they are impossible, then blame is substituted for praise. No harm would be done if these complaints ended in words, but the malcontents form intrigues and plots. . . .

Reminiscences of La Vallière and her son.

16th October, 1718.

The King forgot La Vallière as completely as if he had never set eyes on her or known her in his life. . . . She had as many virtues as the Montespan had vices. Her sole weakness, which was her love for the King, was very excusable, because the King was young, gallant, and handsome and she herself was very young. Everyone pushed and led her into her sin. At heart she was modest and virtuous and very good-natured. I used to say to her sometimes that she had transferred her love and had given to God all that she had in her heart for the King.

People did La Vallière the greatest injustice in accusing her of loving anyone besides the King; but such lies didn't trouble the Montespan.

The Comte de Vermandois¹ was a very good child. The poor young man was as fond of me as if I had been his

¹ Son of Mademoiselle de la Vallière and Louis XIV. He died in 1683 at the age of sixteen.

mother, and when the whole story of his debauchery came out I was naturally very angry with him, because I had warned him very seriously that if he behaved thus I would cease to like him. That touched him to the quick, and he sent messages to me daily, begging to speak to me, if it were only a couple of words. I held out for four weeks, and eventually sent for him. He fell on his knees before me, weeping copiously, and begged my forgiveness, promising to reform, and imploring me to be friends with him again. He said that otherwise he couldn't go on living, and he besought me to continue to help him with my advice. He told me all his story. He had been seduced in a horrible manner.

When the Dauphiness gave birth to the Duc de Bourgogne I said to the King, "Now your Majesty will not, I hope, refuse me a humble request, that I have to make you." The King began to laugh, and said, "What do you want?" I replied, "Sir, poor Monsieur de Vermandois' pardon." He laughed again and said, "You are a staunch friend, but Monsieur de Vermandois has not yet been sufficiently punished for his misdeeds." I said, "The poor boy is so very repentant." The King replied, "I don't feel that I can see him again yet. I am still too angry with him."

Some months more passed before the King consented to see him, but the poor child was very grateful to me for having spoken for him, and my own children could not have been more attached to me than he was. He was well built, but his face, although not disagreeable, was not pretty. He squinted a little.

Monsieur's love of chimes.

29th October, 1718.

Monsieur loved the sound of bells so much that he used to go to Paris on purpose to pass the night of All Saints there, because all the bells were rung. He didn't care for any other sort of music. He used to joke about it himself, but he acknowledged that the bell ringing gave him a great deal of pleasure. . . .

I never let him go anywhere alone without his express command. . . .

LETTERS OF MADAME

The downfall of the Duc du Maine helped by the Duc de Bourbon and the Prince de Conti.

30th October, 1718.

Monsieur le Duc and the Prince de Conti worked hard to bring about the downfall of the Duc du Maine. My son could not make up his mind to it until he had been shown all his treachery so plainly that he realised that he himself would be the victim if he did not teach his enemies a lesson.

The Regent tries to help the Princess of Wales.

1st November, 1718.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES.

My son does not deny that he is indiscreet and inconstant. Once in a comedy we saw a character, Valire, who had grown tired of his mistress, and he said to me, "I often find myself in that state. . . ."

He recommended Lord Stanhope very strongly to speak to the King of England in favour of Your Highness, and he says that he desires nothing so much as to see Your Highness regain the good graces of His Majesty, and he will lose no opportunity to do the utmost he can to bring it about, because he is convinced that it would be in the best interests of both Your Highness and the King for you to live in peace and harmony together.

Monsieur's love for his brother.

4th November, 1718.

The King liked my son and my grandson, but he didn't bother much about my grand-daughters. . . .

He was sincerely fond of the late Monsieur, and with reason, because no child could have obeyed its parents more blindly than Monsieur did the King. He idolised him. . . .

LETTERS OF MADAME

*Lord Stair's misbehaviour in Paris and etiquette for
Ambassadors' wives.*

10th November, 1718, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Lord Stair is now well and healthy. His wife greatly desires that he shall return to England, because she is dying of jealousy here. Her husband has a great passion for a pretty woman called Madame Raymond, who is well-bred and clever, as well as charming. The Elector of Bavaria was very much taken with her. From her modest air one would take her for a vestal, which she certainly is not, in Madame Stair's opinion, and according to gossip.

I have not yet seen the latter because her husband has not made his entrance, and until that is made, ambassadors' wives have no rank at Court. It is not correct to say that the wife of an envoy has had a stool in my presence. The wife of the envoy of the Emperor has never had one, and what is more, no wife, though of good family, who may dine with me, has one when her husband becomes an envoy, but the wives of ambassadors are treated as duchesses and placed in the same rank. I salute them and they may sit in my presence.

What made people think that Madame de Zachmann had a stool was that, when there is gaming in my room to which ladies come who are not entitled to stools, I say to them out of courtesy, "Ladies, join in the game," then seats are brought to the table for them, but, as soon as the play is finished they stand up. The gaming is of so little importance that even my chamber-maids may seat themselves at it.

Madame recalls the great days.

11th November, 1718.

. . . . I do not know whether my son loves his wife very much or not, but she does what she likes with him. The people and all the servants like Madame d'Orléans, but otherwise she is not very popular. She is very inconstant

in her friendships. When I came to France, I saw people whose like will not be found again for many centuries. There were Lulli for music ; Beauchamp for ballets ; Corneille and Racine for tragedy ; Molière for comedy. The actresses Chamelle and Beauval. The actors, Baron, Lafleur, Toulière and Guérin. All these people excelled in their own line. Duclos and Raisin were both very good and the latter was very charming. Her husband was excellent in comic parts. There was also a good Harlequin and an excellent Scaramouche. There were fine actors at the Opera : Cledière, Pompereuil, Godenarche, Désmenil, La Rochechouard, Mauvry, and the actresses Saint-Christophe, Brigogue, Beaucreuse. No one that one hears and sees nowadays approaches them. . . .

Alberoni ; Law.

14th November, 1718.

TO MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

Alberoni is a wicked scamp who tries to make mischief everywhere. It would have been better if he had remained a common gardener, like his father, and had sold cabbages and herbs instead of stirring up all the powers of Christendom one against the other, as he does at present. Truly, it can be said of him that he is a bad lot.

Monsieur Law¹ is worthy of praise, on account of his cleverness, but it must be confessed that he is detested in this country. My son is charmed by his cleverness in business. . . .

How Alberoni met his future patron.

17th November, 1718.

It is not in the least to merit that this scoundrel, Alberoni, owes his fortune. The story is an indelicate one, but as it is amusing and will make you laugh, I shall tell it to you. In the days when Monsieur de Vendôme was com-

¹ A Scottish financier.

manding the Army in Italy, the Duke of Parma sent the Bishop of his Palace to him to treat with him. Monsieur de Vendôme had many good qualities, but they were mingled with faults, as with most men. He had two enormous ones, namely, his debauchery with men, and his horrible disgusting dirtiness. He never used to give audiences to members of his army except on the closed chair, and he did not treat the Bishop of Parma with more ceremony than all the other high officials.

The Bishop came with a whole train of clergy, and was ushered into the Duc de Vendôme's room where he found him on his handsome throne. A seat was given to the Bishop so that he might talk with him. The Bishop saw that Monsieur de Vendôme's face was very purple, and said to him, "It seems to me, Sir, that you are overheated, the air of this country can't be very good." Monsieur Vendôme replied, "It is much worse for my body than my face, look!" and at the same time he got up and showed his behind to the worthy Bishop. The latter immediately rose to take his departure, remarking, "I perceive, Sir, that I am not suited for treating with you. Your manners and your rank do not match each other at all, but I will send one of my almoners to you who will be on your level," and he sent him Alberoni. . . .

Alberoni betrayed his master, the Duc de Parma, for the Duc de Vendôme; then when Vendôme was in Spain, he sacrificed him to the Princesse des Ursins, and betrayed her in turn to the Queen of Spain. That is how this fine fellow has made his fortune. What I have just told you has been his only merit and the foundation of his prosperity.

The Regent arrests the Spanish Ambassador.

9th December, 1718.

My son was obliged to have the Spanish Ambassador, the Prince of Cellamare, arrested, because they found letters from him on his messenger, the Abbé Porto-Carrero, who has been arrested, which led to the discovery of a conspiracy against the King and my son. They sent two Councillors of State to arrest the Ambassador.

Madame does not like ornamentation, but Monsieur did.

9th December, 1718.

All my life, since my earliest youth, I have considered myself so ugly that I have never been tempted to use much ornamentation. Jewels and dress only attract attention to the wearer. It was a good thing that I felt like this because the late Monsieur, who was extremely fond of dressing up, would have had hundreds of quarrels with me as to which of us should wear the most beautiful diamonds. I never used to dress up without his choosing my entire outfit. He himself used to put the rouge on my cheeks. . . .

The Prince of Cellamare's conspiracy.

11th December, 1718, Paris.

I hasten to tell you how worried and disturbed I am because of a terrible plot which has just been discovered against my son. An English banker, or so he calls himself, was going to Spain and my son received a hint that it would be a good thing to arrest him. Men were sent after him and caught him at Poitiers. He carried secret despatches from the Spanish Ambassador at Paris, and you may be sure that these were seized also. The Ambassador warned Alberoni to take steps to ingratiate himself with my son, because as soon as a treaty was signed he was going to poison the little King. The Ambassador added that he would give my son too much to do for him to think of going to war, and continued by saying that he was trying to induce several provinces to revolt; that their party was strong in Paris, and it only needed money to be sent unstintingly. I am sure that my son's brother-in-law, the Lame One, will be found mixed up in this affair. The Ambassador was interrogated by two Councillors of State, and he stated with a laugh that he had written the letters in order to ward off the misfortune of a war, and in order to frighten my son. When they asked him why he said such horrible things about the Regent, he replied that he had to own that the letters

were rather poisonous, but that poison was necessary to counteract poison. The funny thing is that the father-in-law of Madame de Dangeau's son, the Maréchal de Noailles, under-governor to my son, is implicated in the plot. That is the result of his being a relation of that devil incarnate, the Princesse des Ursins, who will pursue my poor son until his death, and the only motive of whose hatred is that he considered her too old to want to be her lover.

The Regent's favourite daughter.

13th December, 1718, Paris.

. . . . Madame d'Orléans has a great influence over my son's mind. He is very fond of all his children, but especially of his eldest daughter. When she was still quite young, she was dangerously ill and was given up by all the doctors. My son was heart-broken at seeing his child about to die and undertook to cure her. He treated her so well that he saved her. Since then he has had more affection for her than for his other children.

The repairer of the Queen's face.

23rd December, 1718.

Madame de Fiennes, who in her youth was with the Queen,¹ used to say to the late Monsieur, "The Queen, your mother, was a foolish woman, God rest her soul." My aunt, the Abbess de Maubuisson, told me that Queen Marie had a man in her service who was called the repairer of the Queen's face. The Queen and all her ladies, even the oldest, were all plastered with red and white. The King was well built, with beautiful legs and pretty feet, a pleasant face and a charming voice, neither too loud nor too small. It would be difficult to find his match. He remained handsome right up to his death. My ladies, who saw him after death, said that then there remained nothing by which he could be recognised.

¹ Anne of Austria.

The Regent is still indifferent to danger.

27th December, 1718, Paris.

The threads of the conspiracy can be gathered up by reading the letters of Cellamare which have been printed. Abbé Brigault has also begun to gossip indiscreetly. All this causes me so much anxiety that I cannot sleep for worry. My heart is always sad. My son takes no heed of anything. I have begged him, in the name of God, not to drive about in his carriage at night. He makes me fine promises, but he does not keep them any more than he used to.

Arrest of the Duc and Duchesse du Maine.

29th December, 1718, Paris.

I am so alarmed that my hand trembles. My son has been in to say that he has been obliged to make up his mind to arrest his brother-in-law, the Duc du Maine and the Duchesse. They are the ringleaders of this horrible Spanish plot. All has been discovered. Letters written by the Spanish Ambassador have been seized, and the people who have been arrested have confessed everything. Since the Duchess is a Princess of the Blood she was arrested by one of the four Captains of the Guards, and her husband, who was in the country, was arrested by a lieutenant. That makes a great difference between them. The Duchess has been sent to Dijon, and her husband to Toullens, which is a little stronghold. All their followers who were in the plot have been put in the Bastille.

Madame d'Orléans is very much upset, but is much more reasonable than Madame la Duchesse. She says that since her husband has taken such strong measures against his brother-in-law there must be very good reasons for it. . . .

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Two treacherous cardinals.

30th December, 1718.

The cardinals cannot be arrested but they can be exiled. Cardinal de Polignac has therefore received orders to retire into one of his abbeys and to remain there. Love has turned his head. He used to be a good friend of my son's, but he has changed since he has been attached to that toad.¹

Magny² is not yet arrested. He flees from convent to convent. He stayed for a long time with the Jesuits.

¹ The Duchesse du Maine.

² Foucault de Magny, introducer of the Ambassadors and son of a State councillor.

CHAPTER X

JANUARY, 1719—JUNE, 1719.

A treacherous letter from Alberoni.

1st January, 1719.

A letter from Alberoni to the *Lame Bastard*¹ was intercepted in which he said, "As soon as war is declared in France, put a match to all the mines." It makes me very impatient to see the way Madame d'Orléans and Madame la Princesse still pretend to believe in the complete innocence of the Duc and Duchesse du Maine, although their guilt is more apparent every day. Madame la Princesse came to me to beg me to intercede for her daughter and ask that her servants, ladies-in-waiting, a chamber-maid and a surgeon might be sent to her. I began to laugh and said, "But Mademoiselle de Launay is one of the most dangerous of all the conspirators in this plot. The Princess replied, "She is in the Bastille." "I know that," I replied, "and that is where she deserves to be." The Princess was grievously offended at that.

The false security of the Duc and Duchesse du Maine.

3rd January, 1719.

They assure me that the Duchesse du Maine begged her husband with all her might to flee, but that he replied, that since neither he nor she had written anything in their own handwriting, nothing could be proved against them, and that if they fled they would look guilty. They never dreamt that Monsieur de Pompadour was able to tell sufficient to get them arrested.

¹ The Duc du Maine.

The Prince de Cellamare has time to destroy his papers.

6th January, 1719, Paris.

It was high time that the Spanish Ambassador's treason was brought to light. One of the Abbé Portocarero's¹ valets had a sick horse and could not keep up with his master. He remained two relays behind where he met the ordinary courier from Poitiers. On asking him "What news?" the postilion replied, "I don't know any except that they have arrested an English bankrupt and a Spanish abbot who was carrying a packet." When the valet heard this, he took a fresh horse, and, instead of following his master, returned to Paris as quickly as possible, going at such a pace that he nearly killed himself, but he beat my son's courier by twelve hours, and thus had time to warn the Prince of Cellamare twelve hours before he was arrested. The Ambassador, therefore, had time to burn the letters and other very important papers. All my son's enemies pretend that the affair is only a trifle, but I don't see how it can be regarded as a trifle for an Ambassador to endeavour to stir up a whole Kingdom and its Parliament against my son, and conceive a plot to assassinate him, his son and his daughter. They would have left none of us alive except myself.

Conspiracy aimed at the arrest of the Regent.

6th January, 1719.

Although their treachery has been discovered, all the traitors have not yet been unmasked. My son said jokingly, "I have caught the head and tail of this monster, but I haven't yet got hold of its body." I quite understand why the merchants have written that my son ought to be arrested, because that was indeed the object of the conspirators,

¹ The Prince of Cellamare, wishing to send his letters to Alberoni by messengers who would not be suspected, entrusted them to two young Spaniards who were returning home after a brief visit to Paris. They were the Abbé de Porto-Carrero, nephew of the Cardinal of the same name, and Monteleon, son of the Spanish ambassador to England.



1 B. Sculpteur pinxit

Le Cherrier sculpsit

*Jey loin de binger un eloge flateur
 PHILIPPE ami du vrai, qu'il cherche, qu'il desire
 D'un critique ingenu se rend le protecteur
 Un Prince sans défauts ne craint point la satire.*

PHILIP, DUKE OF ORLEANS, REGENT OF FRANCE.

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and according to what some of their partisans have written to England, the arrest should have taken place two days later than the date on which everything was discovered.

Duchesse d'Orléans believes her brother to be innocent.

10th January, 1719.

They tried to arrest the Duc de Saint-Aignan¹ at Pampeluna, but he changed clothes with his wife and thus saved himself. . . .

When they arrested the Duc du Maine he said, "I am not afraid, and I shall soon return because my innocence won't take long to establish, but I only answer for myself and not for my wife."

The latter knew very well that she would not return in a hurry. Madame d'Orléans won't believe that her brother could have been in the conspiracy, she says that it was his wife who acted in his name. On the other hand, the Princess believes that her daughter is entirely free from blame, and that it was the Duc du Maine alone who conspired.

The Regent's mid-day meal.

11th January, 1719.

My son overloads his stomach at table. He imagines that it is a good thing to take one meal only, so in place of dinner he drinks a cup of chocolate and when suppertime at last arrives he is very hungry and thirsty. Whatever anyone says against such a régime, he maintains that he cannot work after he has eaten.

The Grand Dauphin starves his mistress.

13th January, 1719.

One day the Dauphin sent for the Raisin woman to come to Choisy, and hid her in a mill with nothing to eat

¹ French ambassador at Madrid.

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or drink, because it was a fast day. He used to think that the greatest of all sins was to eat meat on a fast day. After the court had departed, all he gave her for supper was salad with bread cooked in oil. The Raisin had a good laugh at it herself and told the story to several people. When I heard it I asked the Dauphin what he was thinking about to make his mistress fast thus, and he replied, "I was quite willing to commit one sin but not two," and he laughed heartily at himself.

A German prince and his elderly admirer.

3rd February, 1719.

At Berlin, there was formerly an old Princesse de Schoeningen who was very much smitten with Prince Maurice de Nassau. She could no longer walk, but had porters who carried her around everywhere after him. He was annoyed at this, and when she was tormenting him one day to make him give her his portrait, he asked her what it was in his person that charmed her so greatly. She said that it was his handsome figure, the curve of his back and his beautiful legs. He replied, "Since you have set your heart on having my portrait, I will have myself painted as soon as I have returned to Holland." Some time after he had gone his portrait arrived. Everyone gathered round to see if it was a good likeness, but when they undid it, they saw that he had had himself painted from behind, and he wrote that he was sending the portrait of that part of his person which had most pleased the Princess.

The Duc de Lorraine and the King of Spain are ill.

4th February, 1719, Paris.

As if the fire at the Château de Lunéville were not enough for my poor daughter, her husband has fallen seriously ill as the result of the cold with which he was seized on that fatal night. He had congestion of the lungs, was bled three times and developed a bad and continuous fever. You can

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imagine how distressed my daughter is, because she loves her husband with her whole heart and not as these French ladies love theirs. . . . King Philip is not dead but is seriously ill. He is not a wicked man, but is very obstinate, and when once he gets a thing into his head the devil himself could not drive it out. The Princesse des Ursins made him believe that my son had designs upon his life, and nothing has been able to make him give up the idea, with the result that he hates my son with a bitter hatred.

Mademoiselle de Launay arrested.

15th February, 1719.

Mademoiselle de Montauban and Mademoiselle de Launay,¹ an intellectual woman, who has always carried on a correspondence with Fontenelle, and who was a lady of the bedchamber to Madame du Maine, have both been sent to the Bastille. . . . The Duc du Maine is very sorry that he followed his wife's advice. It would appear that he only meant to follow her in the worst things.

Madame's simple tastes.

16th February, 1719, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

For the last eight or ten days a terrible wind has been blowing, which has done some incredible things. It took the lead out of the bells and carried it right across the river, it tore a couple of great doors off a church, snapped trees in two and hurled down walls. If these things had happened in Westphalia people would see in it the work of sorcerers, but in Paris we no longer believe in magicians and have given up burning them.

The festivities which took place at Heidelberg remind me of an Italian who once said to the Duchess at Versailles, "I see much feasting at the Court of France, but little gaiety." It seems to me that it is not fashionable anywhere these

¹ Afterwards Madame de Staël.

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days to be merry and really enjoy oneself. . . . I would rather see trees and meadows than beautiful palaces, and I prefer a kitchen garden to grounds ornamented with statues and fountains, while a brook pleases me more than the most magnificent cascade. In short, anything natural is infinitely more to my taste than works of art and magnificence. Such things are only pleasing at first sight, and as soon as one is used to them they become tiresome and boring.

Marriage of one of the Regent's daughters.

17th February, 1719.

My son has married the daughter he had by the Desmares woman to the Marquis de Ségur. The mother only saw the child once after she was born, and that was this year when she saw her in a box. Tears came to her eyes, so great was her joy. The girl is very charming, but not by any means as pretty as her mother.

No evidence against Madame de Maintenon.

23rd February, 1719.

. . . I cannot understand all the quarrelling that is going on in the Royal family.¹ If the King believes that the Prince of Wales is not his son, why did he bring him to London, and why did he bring him up, arrange his marriage and refrain from quarrelling with him until two years ago? There must be something behind this that we do not know. In my opinion, it is the King who is in the wrong.

Although it is well known that the Maintenon woman has a finger in everything, nevertheless nothing can be said to her, because her name is not mentioned anywhere. . . . When people tell my son the names of people who hate him to the point of wanting his life, he does nothing but laugh. "They wouldn't dare: I am not so feeble that I cannot defend myself." This makes me impatient . . .

¹ Of England.

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*Parliament more favourable to the Duc du Maine than
to the Regent.*

3rd March, 1719.

The reason why proofs against Malézieux have not been published and the rascal has not been made to stand his trial is that his misdeeds are so mixed up with those of Madame du Maine that she would have to be brought forward and be judged by Parliament, but Parliament is better disposed towards the Duc and Duchesse du Maine than towards my son, so that they might easily declare them innocent and take them out of my son's hands, which would throw things into a worse state than they are at present. They are therefore trying to obtain evidence of such a nature that there can be no contradiction nor justification of it before Parliament.

*Madame's account of how the King came to marry Madame de
Maintenon.*

5th March, 1719.

It was through the Montespan that the King fell in love with the old bawd. At first, in order to have her in charge of her children, she concealed from the King the fact that the creature had led a disorderly life. She told everyone who came near the King to praise the woman and extol her virtues and piety. Thus the King was persuaded that everything bad and unfavourable he heard about her was false, and he never changed his erroneous opinion of her. The Montespan was a very capricious creature, who could never restrain herself in any way. She was fond of all sorts of amusement and was bored when she was alone with the King. She only loved him through ambition and self-interest and cared nothing for him personally. In order to amuse him she had the idea of sending for the Maintenon, so that he would not notice that she (Montespan) was playing with him, and amusing herself. The King, however, who loved a quiet life, longed to spend his time with her, and

often reproached her with not loving him sufficiently, with the result that there were frequently rows and they quarrelled violently. Then the Scarron woman would appear and would restore the peace, and soothe the poor King. She made him notice the Montespan's bad temper more and more, played the saint, and made the King think that God sent him this affliction because of his sinning with the Montespan. She was an eloquent woman with beautiful eyes. The King thus became accustomed to her and imagined that she would make a saint of him. He wooed her, but she resisted, and gave him to understand, that although she might have the greatest liking for him in the world, yet she would do nothing to offend God. This gave the King such a great admiration for the woman and such a disgust for Montespan's dissipated life, that he began to think of reformation.

The old woman used her beloved Duc du Maine to persuade his mother that, since the King had taken other mistresses such as Ludre and Fontanges, she would no longer have any power, and would be an object of scorn to the whole Court. That annoyed her and she was in a bad temper when the King came to visit her. Maintenon, on the other hand, never ceased sympathising with the King. She used to tell him that he would be damned if he did not live on better terms with the Queen. The King repeated it all to the Queen, who, being one of the best women in the world, thought she had much to thank Maintenon for. She singled her out and consented to her being appointed second Lady-in-Waiting to the Bavarian Dauphiness, with the result that Maintenon had now nothing more in common with Montespan. The latter became so furious that she told the King the Scarron woman's whole life story. But the King, who knew that she was a spiteful devil, and would when angry spare no one, refused to believe her whatever she said to him.

The Duc du Maine urged his mother to retire from the Court for a while, saying that he would persuade the King to recall her. She was fond of her son and thought that he wished her well, so she went to Paris and wrote to the King saying that she would never return. The Duc du Maine very quickly had all his mother's luggage sent after her to Paris, without waiting for her instructions. As for her furniture, he had it all thrown out of the window, so that she could

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never again return to Versailles. The King had been so wilfully and harshly treated by the Montespan, that he was heartily thankful to be rid of her, in no matter what manner. If he had kept her longer he would not have been safe with her, so mad was she when she was in a temper.

The Queen was greatly obliged to Maintenon for having driven away Montespan and having caused the King to sleep with her again, because being a good Spaniard, she did not dislike that part of it. Being a good-hearted woman, she thought that gratitude obliged her to do everything she could for Maintenon, thus she raised no objection to the woman being appointed a lady-in-waiting. It was only shortly before her death that she discovered how Maintenon had duped her. After the Queen's death, Louis XIV. thought he had gained a triumph over virtue herself when he lay with the old woman, as he did every afternoon. She gained such a hold over him at length that he actually married her.

A disagreeable pair.

6th March, 1719.

The Duc de Deux-Ponts is a very poor specimen, both as far as his appearance and his manners are concerned. He is certainly the most disagreeable being that God ever made. He imagines that he and I are as alike as two drops of water, but I flatter myself that I am less disagreeable than he and have a little more common sense. His wife is deformed. They are a pair of very unpleasant wretches. I rejoice that they have no children. They would certainly have been imbecile, and I have enough fools already amongst my German relations.

Madame has given up listening to sermons.

9th March, 1719.

. . . . They say that the Imperialists wanted to arrest the Chevalier de Saint-Georges at Milan, but they only got Lord Mar and Lord Perth. The Chevalier betook

himself by sea to Spain, where Alberoni is equipping a fleet for him to proceed to Ireland.

After dinner I can never go to the sermon, since I fall asleep immediately, and as we are not in the tribune of a church, but in front of the pulpit in an armchair for all the world to see, that would really be a scandal. Moreover, since I have become old, I snore very loudly when I sleep, which would cause so much laughter that even the preacher himself would be distracted.

The Duc du Maine repents his folly.

10th March, 1719.

The Duc du Maine has written to his sister saying, "Instead of putting me in prison they should have stripped me of my clothes and put me in a straight-jacket for allowing myself to be led thus by my wife." And to Madame de Langeron he wrote that he is feeling a calmness of spirit that he looks upon as a gift of God, and that he is worrying about nothing except his children, and would desire nothing further if they were with him.

The arrest of an impudent Duke.

30th March, 1719, Paris.

Every day we hear of fresh treachery. The day before yesterday the Duc de Richelieu came to see the Marquis de Biron who is very fond of my son, and with a thousand professions of devotion to him begged urgently for permission to depart to rejoin his regiment. At the same time a letter from Alberoni to the Duke was intercepted, which made his treason as clear as daylight. My son had him arrested in his bed and taken straightway to the Bastille. Many tears will be shed in Paris on his account because the ladies are all in love with him. I cannot understand why, because he is a little toad in whom I can see nothing fascinating. He is cowardly, insolent, fickle and indiscreet. He speaks evil of all his mistresses, and yet a certain Princess of the Blood¹

¹ The Duchesse de Berri.

was so much smitten with him that when she became a widow she was quite determined to marry him. . . .

The Duc de Richelieu and his mistresses.

31st March, 1719.

The Duc de Richelieu has had all his mistresses painted wearing the dresses of different religious orders. Mademoiselle de Charolais¹ is painted as a Recollet and they say she exactly resembles one. The Maréchaux de Villars and d'Estrees have Capuchin robes. . . . When the Duc de Richelieu was confronted with his own letter to Alberoni he confessed to his own personal share but would say nothing about his accomplices.

The flirtations of the Dauphiness.

2nd April, 1719.

The Dauphiness never cared for the Duc de Richelieu, although he boasted that she did and was sent to the Bastille for it. The Dauphiness was a little flirtatious. She used to chatter with all the young fellows, but if she really fell in love with anyone it was only with Nangis. She persuaded him to pretend to be the lover of Madame de la Vrillière who had neither such a good figure nor such charming manners as the Dauphiness, but whose face was much prettier and who was a terrible flirt. It is believed that this game had a serious result. The worthy Dauphin was like all other husbands of frivolous wives, who are the last to notice such things. The Duc de Bourgogne never dreamt that his wife had a thought for Nangis, although it was very apparent to the rest of the world. He was sincerely fond of Nangis, and thought that it was in order to please him that his wife used to talk to Nangis. He was quite convinced that his favourite had an affair with Madame de la Vrillière.

¹ Louise Anne, Mademoiselle de Charolais (1695-1758). Third daughter of the Duc de Bourbon. Her life was one long scandal, and during the reign of Louis XV. she seems to have acted as a sort of Royal brothel keeper.

A lesson in titles.

4th April, 1719, Saint-Cloud.

. . . . It is not true that I have changed my name. I can never have any other title in France than that of Madame, because my husband was the King's brother, and the wife of the King's brother is called by no other name. The daughters of the King are also called thus, but to distinguish them their baptismal name is added. Thus the three daughters of Henry IV. were called Madame Elisabeth, who was Queen of Spain, Madame Henriette, who was Queen of England, and Madame Christine, who was Duchess of Savoy. The daughters of the King's brother are called Mademoiselle. The eldest bears this title with nothing added, the others add to it the name of their appanages. Thus we have Mademoiselle de Chartres, Mademoiselle de Valois, Mademoiselle de Montpensier. It is the same with the King's sons. The eldest is called Monsieur, the others take the title of their appanages. It is through slackness that people say the Duc de Bourgogne, the Duc de Berri, they should say Monsieur de Bourgogne, Monsieur de Berri. . . .

Mademoiselle de Valois falls in love with the Duc de Richelieu.

13th April, 1719, Saint-Cloud.

You ask what has happened lately to make me so bad-tempered. I cannot tell you in detail. It is the terrible affair of Mademoiselle de Valois¹ with that accursed Duc de Richelieu, who has shown the letters he received from her, because he only cares for her from vanity. All the young noblemen round the Court have seen these letters in which she makes arrangements to meet him. Her mother wants me to take her back with me, which I quite positively refused to do. But they won't give up the fight, and I am horribly upset, and hate the whole human species. I can't bear the thought of seeing Mademoiselle de Valois again, and yet I must do so, in order to avoid a dreadful scandal. The sight

¹ Charlotte-Aglæé, third daughter of the Regent.

of that silly girl makes me ill. All this is the result of her mother's indifference and apathy. God pardon her, but she has brought up her daughters badly.

The Duke is brazen and full of impertinence. He knows how good-natured my son is, and takes advantage of him. If he got his deserts he would pay for his effrontery and trickery with his head. He has thrice merited it. I am not cruel, but I would see the rascal swinging on the gallows without shedding a tear. . . .

Our nun has been chosen Abbess of Chelles. A courier was sent to Rome yesterday to obtain the confirmation of the election. . . .

The Regent's tender-heartedness.

15th April, 1719, Paris.

My son cannot bring himself to make himself feared, and his enemies know it very well. The day he sent the young Duc de Richelieu to the Bastille he was as much upset about it as if some great sorrow had befallen himself, yet he can hardly have any regard for that little fop who has often treated him disrespectfully and has spoken of him and his daughter in a manner which, in itself, was enough to deserve the Bastille, but my son took no notice of it. . . .

Madame de Maintenon's fortune.

17th April, 1719.

The amount which the Noailles, nephew and niece of the Maintenon woman, have inherited from her is immense; but people do not know how much she has hidden.

Death of Madame de Maintenon.

18th April, 1719.

The old bawd snuffed out at Saint-Cyr last Saturday, April 15th, between four and five o'clock in the evening.

The news of the arrest of the Duc du Maine and his wife made her fall in a swoon and that may have been the cause of her death, because since that time she has never had a minute's rest and happiness. Anger, and the destruction of the hopes she had of reigning through him, poisoned her blood and gave her the measles, then she had a continuous fever for twenty days. A storm which broke out suppressed the illness so that she suffocated. She must have been eighty-six years old. I imagine that what must have hurt her most when dying was having to leave me and my son behind her in the best of health.

Impudence of the Duc de Richelieu.

19th April, 1719.

Mademoiselle de Charolais . . . also says that she will not speak to my son because he has put the Duke in the Bastille. The aforesaid Duke struts about on the terrace, all curled and dressed up, and all the ladies gather below in the street to look at the beautiful sight. . . .

Madame's indifference to the death of her old enemy.

20th April, 1719.

TO MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

Last Saturday evening we lost a pious soul at Saint-Cyr—the old Maintenon woman. She died like a young person, and she concealed four years of her age, because she said she was eighty-two years old, whereas she was really eighty-six. If she had died twenty years earlier, I should have rejoiced heartily, but now the news causes me neither pleasure nor pain. . . . If, in the other world, where all are equal and there are no differences of rank, it had to be decided whether she was to remain with the King or with her first husband, the paralytic Scarron, and if the King knew all that was hidden from him, there is no manner of doubt that he would cheerfully surrender her to Scarron.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Madame goes visiting.

22nd April, 1719, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . I am going to spend half an hour with you and then I shall go to the Convent of Val de Grâce, where my grand-daughter is due from Chelles, which she has left for the time being, until the present Abbess retires and fixes up her affairs with the nuns. They have given her a pension of 12,000 francs, until there is another Abbey vacant to which she can be transferred. I don't think that there has ever been an Abbess as young as my grand-daughter before. She will be twenty-one years old next August.

On Monday I am going to stay with the Prince de Conti, who has invited me to his castle at Choisy, which is two hours' journey from here. It is a beautiful residence which was built by the Grande Mademoiselle, who bequeathed it to the Dauphin, but the late King thought it too far from Versailles and made the Dauphin exchange it for Meudon, which belonged to Madame de Louvois, whose heirs sold it to the Prince de Conti. It is very pleasantly situated on the banks of the Seine, and the gardens are so near the river that it is pleasant to fish there. Wednesday, being my big day for letter-writing, I shall only go in the evening to bid the King good-bye and see the play. On Thursday I shall return to Paris, and will write you a few lines, and after going to Church, I shall depart at mid-day for my dear Saint-Cloud, with the intention of spending the whole summer there, if God permits. Now you know all my plans.

What Lord Stair said shocked me, but did not frighten me, because I knew very well that my son was safe and sound. The poor lord is himself very ill, having been taught too much French by the French ladies. I am extremely sorry for his virtuous wife.

About the late King Louis.

22nd April, 1719.

The late King was not so brave as Monsieur, but he was no coward. . . . He was very much taken with the

Comte de Grammont, who was certainly very amusing, and he showed him much favour and admitted him to all the trips to Marly, which was always a distinguished favour. . . . The King often lamented that he had not been allowed to mix enough with people in his youth, but it was the fault of his own nature, because Monsieur, who was educated with the King, was always ready to talk to all sorts of people. The King used to say, laughingly, that Monsieur's chattering had disgusted him with speech. "Good heavens," he used to say, "must I, in order to please people, talk as inanely and foolishly as my brother!"

The Duchesse de Berri's gout.

23rd April, 1719.

I went to see Madame de Berri last Sunday and found her in a sad state, she had such terrible pain in the soles and toes of her feet that it made the tears come to her eyes. I saw that my presence prevented her crying, so I came away. I thought she looked very bad. Three doctors held a consultation over her and they decided to bleed her from the feet. They had great difficulty in getting her to consent to it because the pain in her feet was so dreadful that she shrieked if the bedclothes made the slightest movement. The bleeding was very successful and she suffered less after it. She has gout in both feet.

The Duc de Richelieu's letters.

25th April, 1719.

They found other letters besides love letters in the Duc de Richelieu's chest. Alberoni had confided in a rascal who had previously been of use to him, and who was a spy on my son. This man brought my son a letter from Alberoni which was opened, read, copied, promptly re-sealed and sent on to the little Duke, who replied to it. My son has this reply but he cannot use it because it is in cypher. . . .

They have just arrested Monsieur de Laval, the brother of the Duchesse de Roquelaure.

LETTERS OF MADAME

An account of Mademoiselle Chouin.

26th April, 1719.

The first Dauphin followed his father's example and took unto himself a miserable and smelly creature who was a maid of honour to the old Princesse de Conti. She was called Mademoiselle Chouin, and is still living in Paris. People think that he married her secretly, but I would take my oath that he did not. She looked like a pug dog, and was small, with short legs, a round face, a short turned-up nose, and a large mouth, filled with rotten teeth, which smelt so badly that one could smell them from the other side of the room. Her neck was very thick which evidently charmed Monseigneur, because he used to beat a tattoo on it as if it were a drum. This short fat creature had lots of intelligence, however. I believe the Dauphin took to tobacco in order not to smell the odour of the Chouin's bad teeth. . . .

A discussion on Bibles ; the Duc de Richelieu.

27th April, 1719, Saint-Cloud.

You say that it doesn't tire you to listen to your two preachers, but I must confess, to my shame, that I know of nothing more boring than a sermon. No dose of opium would put me to sleep more effectively, especially in the evening.

I have three beautiful Bibles, one Merian, one which my aunt, the Abbess de Maubuisson, bequeathed to me, a Lunebourg edition, which is very handsome, and another which the Princesse d'Oldenbourg, the daughter of the Princesse de Tarente, sent me last year. It is like myself, small and fat, but neither the print nor the pictures are as good as in the other two. When I came to France, it was forbidden to everyone except myself to read the Bible. A few years later it was allowed. But the Constitution,¹ about which such a fuss was made, forbade it anew. To be sure, people are not inclined to obey it. I said jokingly that

¹ The Constitution Unigenitus.

I was quite prepared to obey the constitution and undertook never to read any French Bible. As a matter of fact, I only read my German Bibles. The Bible is good and healthy nourishment, and is very interesting as well. . . .

I share your grief for the loss of your little niece, but you should not grieve for the loss of a little girl so deeply. Good Heavens, what a blessing it would have been for my son if his three eldest daughters had died in their infancy!

I will say no more on that subject. The Duc de Richelieu is an arch-debauchee and a coward. He believes neither in God nor His word. He has never in his life done, nor ever will do anything praiseworthy, and he is ambitious and as false as the Devil. He is not yet twenty-four years old. I do not consider him as good-looking as do all the ladies who are silly about him. He has a very good figure and beautiful hair, an oval face and very bright eyes, but everything about his appearance is foppish. He is insinuating and not lacking in intelligence, but his insolence is unheard-of. He is the worst of spoilt children. The first time he was sent to the Bastille was for saying that he was on the best of terms with the Dauphiness and with her young ladies, which was a horrible lie. The second time was for making out that the Chevalier de Bavière wanted to fight with him. . . .

The Duc de Richelieu's own conspiracy.

30th April, 1719, Saint-Cloud.

The Duc de Richelieu was not concerned in the conspiracy of the Duc and Duchesse du Maine. He had made a plot of his own. He took it into his head to make himself such a powerful personage that he could not be denied a marriage very much higher than he could aspire to.¹

When he saw that hope vanish, he began to conspire out of spite. It was not for his sake that two ladies wanted to fight a duel, but over the Prince de Soubise, son of the Prince de Rohan, who is not a bad fellow, but looks like a calf which is still sucking. . . .

¹ Mademoiselle de Charolais, of the house of Condé.

The Governor of Metz, Monsieur de Saillant, came to Paris a few days ago to speak for his nephew, but I doubt whether he will have any success, although I fear that the rascal will not be punished as he deserves. My son cannot make up his mind to spill blood. I think that he will repent later of his clemency, because unless you make yourself feared by the French, you have no hold over them. . . .

Arrest of Mar and Perth at Milan.

2nd May, 1719.

I am becoming so absent-minded as I grow old that I expect I shall finish by growing childish or like my aunt the Princess Elisabeth.¹ One day, when she was going to a masked ball, she mistook a bedroom utensil for a mask and said, "But why has this mask no eyes and why does it smell so bad?" When she died she was only sixty-two years old, and I am nearly sixty-seven.

It is not true that the Chevalier de Saint-Georges has been captured at Milan, but they arrested Lord Mar, Lord Perth and another man whom I believe was Lord Mar's son. They have been released and their master is in Spain. The Pope and the Spaniards are giving him a great deal of support and they tell me that he has many adherents in England, Scotland and Ireland; but the Princess of Wales, on the other hand, says that there is nothing to be feared.

The Duchesse du Maine in prison.

4th May, 1719.

Madame la Princesse has earnestly begged my son to allow Madame du Maine to leave Dijon, where she says the air is very unhealthy. My son has consented to her going by coach from Dijon to Châlons-sur-Saône, escorted by His Majesty's Guards. She was under the impression that she would have more liberty there and would be simply confined to the town, so she was greatly surprised when they

¹ Abbess of Herford.

kept her as strictly prisoner at Châlons as at Dijon. When she asked the reason for it, they told her that everything had now been discovered and that all the other prisoners had blabbed. She was very much put out at first, but afterwards she pulled herself together and said, "The Duc d'Orléans thinks that I hate him; if he would take my advice I would give him better counsel than anyone else." Her husband remains very quiet.

Gossip about King Louis and his Spanish wife.

12th May, 1719.

The King used to spend every night in the Queen's bed but not always as she, with her Spanish temperament, would have liked. The Queen could thus tell very well when the King had been running hither and thither. The King always had consideration for her, and desired his mistresses to show her great respect. He liked her for her goodness and the sincere attachment she always had for him, in spite of his unfaithfulness. He was really sorry when she died.

Madame de Montespan and Mademoiselle de la Vallière compared.

14th May, 1719.

The Montespan woman was more beautiful than La Vallière; she had a lovely mouth with beautiful teeth, but she had an insolent air. You could tell from her face that she had some end in view. She had beautiful fair hair, pretty hands, and fine arms, which La Vallière had not, but the latter was very neat, while Montespan was a dirty person.

La Vallière's last days at Court.

14th May, 1719.

It was at the instigation of the Montespan that the King treated La Vallière so badly. Her heart was broken by it,

but the poor creature imagined that she could make no greater sacrifice to God than by sacrificing to Him the source of her sins, and she thought it would be all the more agreeable to God, if the penitence were to come from the place where she had sinned. So she stayed, through penitence, with the Montespan. The latter, who had more spirit, used to mock at her publicly and treated her very badly, and made the King act in the same way. The King had to cross La Vallière's room when he wished to visit Montespan. He had a beautiful spaniel called Malice, and at the instigation of Montespan he took this little dog and threw it at the Duchesse de la Vallière, saying, "Here you are, Madam, this will be company enough for you." It was all the harder for her to bear since he was not going to remain with her but was going to visit Montespan. Nevertheless, she endured all this patiently. She had as many virtues as Montespan had vices. The weakness she had for the King was very excusable, because everyone urged her to it and abetted. The King was young, gay and handsome, and she herself was very young, but at heart she was modest and chaste and very good-natured. When she was made a duchess and her children were legitimatised, she was in despair, because she had been under the impression that no one would know that she had had children. In appearance she had an indescribable charm. Her figure was elegant, but her teeth were bad. I used to think her eyes were even more beautiful than Madame de Montespan's, and her whole bearing was modest. She limped slightly, but that was not unbecoming to her.

A plot to kidnap the Regent.

20th May, 1719, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

See, my dear Louisa, whether I haven't grounds for being anxious. The day before yesterday they arrested a man called La Jonckère, who had undertaken to kidnap my son and deliver him up alive or dead, into the hands of Alberoni. He only missed him by a quarter of an hour in the *Bois de Boulogne*.

Death of the Marquis d'Effiat.

4th June, 1719.

Yesterday there died at Paris at the age of eighty years, a man, who, during the thirty years I spent with my husband, did me a great deal of harm. God forgive him. This was the Marquis d'Effiat, who was Master of the Horse and Master of the Hounds to Monsieur, and who retained the same position under my son. He left him a beautiful residence worth a hundred thousand livres, but my son would not accept it and handed it over to his heirs. He was an extremely rich man and had chests full of silver and gold, so that when fire broke out in his lodging so heavy were they that six men could not carry them away. He left no children and his heirs are full of joy. . . .

The debonair Regent.

7th June, 1719.

Between my son and his mistresses everything is full speed ahead and with no trace of gallantry. It reminds me of the ancient patriarchs who had many women. . . . The Duc de Saint-Simon was annoyed one day at my son's kindness, and said to him angrily, "Oh, you are very debonair, since Louis the Debonair no one has seen anyone so debonair as you." My son nearly made himself ill with laughing.

La Vallière's penitence.

14th June, 1719.

La Vallière was not yet in a convent when I came to France, she remained at Court for another two years. We became intimately acquainted. When she donned the religious garb, I was very much moved at seeing that charming creature take such a course, and when they put her under the winding-sheet, I began to weep so bitterly that I could

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no longer let myself be seen. After the ceremony was over, she came to comfort me, and she said that I must congratulate her and not pity her because she began, that very moment, to feel happy. She said that never in her life would she forget the graciousness and friendship I had shown her, which she had never deserved from me. Some time afterwards I returned to see her because I was anxious to know why she had stayed so long in attendance on the Montespan woman. She told me that God had touched her heart and made her see her sin. So she thought that she should do penitence and endure what was to her the most bitter thing in the world, to share the King's love and see herself despised by him. For three years after she lost the King's love she suffered the tortures of the damned, and offered all her misery up to God as an expiation of her past sins, and since those sins had been public, she thought her penitence should also be public. She was taken for a fool who had noticed nothing, and it was precisely that which caused her most suffering, until God put it into her heart to leave everything and serve Him alone, which she did. But on account of her sins she was not worthy to live with such pious and pure souls as the other Carmelites. It was plain to see that all this came from the depths of her heart.

Madame recalls old memories.

16th June, 1719.

I was never so much amused in my life as during the excursion I made with the King into Flanders. The Queen and the Dauphiness were still alive then. As soon as we arrived in a town, we went first of all to our own quarters, then to the play, which was often so bad that we nearly laughed ourselves sick. I recall that at Dunkirk there was a company playing *Mithridate*. In speaking of *Monime*, *Mithridate* let fall a terribly coarse word. Immediately he turned to the Dauphiness and said to her, "Madame, I beg your pardon, my tongue slipped." You can imagine what a roar of laughter there was! It was still worse when the Prince de Conti, husband of the *Grande Princesse*, who was seated above the orchestra, laughed so much that he fell

into the orchestra, and when he caught hold of the cords of the curtain, the curtain fell on to the lights and caught fire. It was put out immediately, but there was a large hole in it. The players pretended to take no notice, and went on playing although they could only be seen through the hole.

On the days when there was no play we went for drives and ate banquets. In short, there was something new every day. After the King's supper there were magnificent displays of fireworks given by the towns of Flanders. Everyone was gay and the Court was always assembled together and nothing was thought of but laughter and amusement.

CHAPTER XI

1719-1720.

Gossip about Madame de Grancey.

4th July, 1719.

After my husband's death, I only saw the Grancey woman once, when I met her in the garden. When she became ugly she was in despair. She changed so terribly that no one could recognise her. Her beautiful nose became very large and long and was covered with warts. On each wart she placed a patch which gave a very strange effect. White and red would no longer stay on her face and broke into scales. Her eyes became sunken and wan. You can imagine what a difference this made to her face. In Spain, all the women down to the chamber-maids are shut up at night. When the Grancey followed our Queen to Spain, as a lady-in-waiting, she also was shut up at night. She was greatly upset about this. When she died she cried, "My God, must I die, when all my life I have never given death a single thought?" She had never done anything but play with her lovers until three or six o'clock in the morning, feed herself, smoke tobacco and then resume her ordinary occupation.

Once upon a time she had a dispute with Madame de Bouillon. In the evening it occurred to the Grancey to hide herself in an embrasure in this lady's window, and she, not knowing that she was overheard, was gossiping freely with the Marquise d'Allaye about the Grancey's irregular life, of which, as a matter of fact, there was not much good to be said. Suddenly Grancey bounded into the room and began to abuse Madame de Bouillon like a fishwife. The latter never can hold her tongue and answered back, and charming things were said. Madame de Bouillon at once went to complain of the Grancey first for having been

in her room at night, and secondly for having insulted her in her own room. Monsieur scolded Grancey, told her that it was her own fault that she had got into this trouble and ordered her to make her peace. Grancey said, "Can I reconcile myself with Madame de Bouillon after all the evil she said about me?" After having reflected a little, she added, "Yes, I can do it, because she never said I was ugly." So they embraced each other and made peace.

About the death of King James II.

8th July, 1719.

King James died with great courage and resolution, without bigotry, and not at all as he had lived. I saw him and spoke to him twenty-four hours before his death, and I said to him, "I hope Your Majesty will soon be better." He began to smile and said, "And when shall I die? Haven't I lived long enough?"

The King and Monsieur had been accustomed to dirty houses from their infancy, so that they looked upon such things as quite ordinary, but they were very particular about their persons.

The predicament of an ambassador's wife.

14th July, 1719.

Monsieur d'Entremont, the last Ambassador from Sicily, was on the point of departing, and had already had his farewell audience, but there were business matters that made it necessary for him to remain some time longer in Paris. He found himself without a habitation, because his house had already been rented. A lady, seeing Madame d'Entremont in a fix, said to her, "Madame, I offer you my house, my room and my bed." The Ambassador's wife, not knowing where to turn, accepted the offer with much pleasure. She went to the lady's house and went straight off to bed, because the poor woman was old and ill. Towards midnight she heard a noise as if somebody were coming stealthily up

the stairs. Someone opened a door which opened into a narrow lane, entered and began to undress himself. The Ambassador's wife began to shout, "Who is that?" He replied, "Will you keep quiet? It is I?" "Who are you?" she asked. The unknown answered, "Since when have you been so timid? You are not usually so shy with me. I am coming to bed in a moment." At these words the Ambassador's wife began to shout "thieves." The man dressed himself again hastily and fled.

Death of the Duchesse de Berri.

17th July, 1719.

Last night the Duchesse de Berri died between two and three o'clock. Her end was very peaceful. They say she died as if she had gone to sleep. My son stayed with her until she had completely lost consciousness. She was his dearly-loved child.

The Duchesse de Berri's indiscretions.

18th July, 1719.

The poor Duchesse de Berri killed herself as surely as if she had discharged a pistol at her head, because she ate melons and figs, and drank milk in secret. She confessed it to me herself, and my doctor told me that she had shut him and the other doctors out of her room for a fortnight in order to accomplish this fine work. She said to me last night, "Ah, Madame, that crash of thunder hurts me," which was quite evident.

The Regent sorrows for his daughter.

20th July, 1719.

My son cannot sleep. The poor Duchesse de Berri could not be saved. Her head was full of water, she had an ulcer in her stomach and another in her thigh. The

rest of her was like pulp, and her liver was attacked. They took her secretly at night, followed by all her household, to Saint-Denis. Such difficulty did they have in composing her funeral oration, that it was thought better to have none at all. She said that she was dying without regret, since she had made her peace with God, and that if her life were prolonged, she would probably sin against Him again. This moved us more deeply than I can say. At heart she was good, and if her mother had taken more care of her and brought her up better, there would have been nothing but good to say of her. Her loss goes to my heart. But let us talk of something else because this is too sad. . . .

In the beginning when I came to France, I wanted to go for a walk in the garden at Versailles one night. The Swiss who was on guard refused to let me pass and I said to him, "My good Swiss, let me go for a walk; I am the wife of the King's brother." "Has the King a brother?" he replied. I said, "What, don't you know that? How long have you been in the King's service?" "For thirty years." "Then you must know that the King has a brother because every time he passes you have to salute." "Yes," replied the Swiss, "when they beat the drum I present arms, but I have never been told for whom it is, and whether the King has a brother, or children, it is all the same to me."

I made the King laugh when I told him this story.

The death of the second Duke of Schomberg.

30th July, 1719, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . . As for the poor Duke of Schomberg, you will have seen from my previous letters that I knew that he was dead. They say that it was very fortunate for his daughter that he died thus suddenly, because it appears that it was his intention to recognise his mistress as his wife and to disinherit his daughter and make a bastard he had had by his mistress his heir. That would have been a horrible thing to do.

I did not know that the Princess of Wales could not stand the scent of orange blossom. The Elector of Bavaria falls in a faint when he sees oranges and lemons.

LETTERS OF MADAME

The Duchesse de Berri's debts.

1st August, 1719, Saint-Cloud.

In spite of her large revenues, the Duchesse de Berri leaves my son 400,000 *livres* of debts. The poor princess was horribly robbed and pilfered. . . .

My son is heart-broken, and all the more so since he sees clearly that if he had not been excessively indulgent to his beloved daughter, and had acted more like a father, she would be still alive and well.

French women are ambitious.

6th August, 1719.

I have no ambition. I do not wish to govern and I should find no pleasure in doing so. That is not the way with French women. The lowest servant-girl thinks she is quite capable of directing the State. I consider that so ridiculous that I have been cured of any mania of that sort. Although I am not rich for my station, I would not take the least trouble in the world to have as large a fortune as the Duchesse de Berri had. She had an income double mine, and yet she left 400,000 *livres* of debts. At least that will not be found after my death.

A reminiscence of Louis XIV. and his first love.

11th August, 1719.

The Cardinal sent his niece¹ back to Italy. When she departed the King wept copiously. Madame de Colonna said to him, "You are King, you weep, and I go away." That was a lot said in a few words; as for her sister, the Comtesse de Soissons, the King has always been very friendly with her, without, however, being in love with her. He always treated her generously. The smallest present was 2,000 golden *louis*.

¹ Maria Mancini.

Madame de Maintenon in her old age.

12th August, 1719.

The Maintenon's eyes still retained their fire, but she pinched up her mouth and crinkled her nostrils, which gave her a disagreeable air. She used to put it on when she saw anyone who displeased her, my excellency, for example. Then she would pull back her mouth and let her lip fall.

The Regent and his mistress.

15th August, 1719.

Madame d'Orléans has quite brought back her husband to herself and he follows her advice and goes abroad at night. On Wednesday night he went to Asnières where the Parabère woman has a house, and supped there. When he wished to get into his coach after midnight, he fell into a hole and hurt his foot. . . .

My son says that he likes Parabère because she thinks of nothing but her own amusement and does not meddle in politics. That would be all right if she weren't a drunkard as well and didn't make my son eat and drink so much and career out to Asnières at night.

The King's birthday.

27th August, 1719, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Last Friday was very hot and I stayed out on my balcony until nine o'clock, watching the fireworks at the Tuileries, which are let off each year on the King's birthday. This year, however, things didn't pass off very well, as from all accounts seven people were suffocated to death in the crowd, amongst them being a pregnant woman and an abbot. The panic was started by pickpockets who began the trouble by snatching a poor girl's headdress off her head. I was not

able to sleep all night because of the heat and the accursed bugs. Talking of those particular beasts, the Princess of Wales writes that people are complaining of them everywhere in London, and the Queen of Sicily writes that they found her bed full of them.

. . . The Duchess's¹ affairs are in absolute disorder and there have been terrible thefts. All the people who were in the Duchess's service appear to be quite reconciled to her loss, and I am, too, because of many things which I have discovered since her death, and about which I cannot write. My dear Princess of Wales' handwriting is very bad. She taught herself to write, so it is not surprising that she does it badly. I have become accustomed to it with time, and now I can read it without difficulty, but at first I had great difficulty. Otherwise her letters are very good.

Sad days at Saint-Cloud ; Law takes charge of the finances.

31st August, 1719, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Last Monday, I should have liked to have gone to the *Bois de Boulogne* as usual, but all my grooms and coachmen were so ill that I had to remain at Saint-Cloud, where I think there will soon be more dead than alive, because measles and fever are taking a terrible toll and it is dreadful to see how many people are dying. On all sides there is nothing but trouble. . . . Desolate faces are to be seen everywhere, except for my grandson, the Duc de Chartres, who is still gay and happy. I do not remember (as I have always had a bad memory and it is getting worse) whether I told you that my grandson had bought from the Duc de la Feuillade, the governorship of the Dauphiné. All governors of provinces have a captain of the guards, and so my grandson has one also, and he presented him to me yesterday with great satisfaction. He is the Marquis d'O, whose daughter was with the Duchesse de Berri, and who fell into disgrace on account of her dealings with the wicked Mouchy woman.

¹ Duchesse de Berri.

Madame d'Orléans has placed her amongst her ladies. That is all the news I know. Nothing has happened for the last six days except many measures dealing with the finances, which I do not understand at all. I only know that my son, in conjunction with an Englishman called Law,¹ whom the French call *Lass*, has found a means of meeting all the late King's debts this year, although they amounted to twice a hundred-thousand millions. So that the young King will be quite a rich monarch instead of a poor one.

A Princess begs leave to speak to her lover.

2nd September, 1719.

Mademoiselle de Charolais has sent secretly to my son to ask what she must do to see the Duc de Richelieu and speak to him before he leaves for Richelieu. My son replied that she might ask Cardinal de Noailles, because, since the latter had taken him to his house at Conflans, he should know better than anyone how the Duke could be seen. As she has since discovered that the Duke had arrived at Saint-Germain she went there immediately.

¹ John Law of Lauriston near Edinburgh (1671-1729). He was the son of a prosperous goldsmith whose business included banking and money-lending, and as a boy Law showed an aptitude for all sorts of mathematics and finance. He grew up a handsome and accomplished young fop of a dissipated frame of mind. After selling his inherited estate of Lauriston to his mother, he took himself to London to lead the life of a young man about town. In 1694, however, he had the misfortune to kill his adversary in a duel. He was arrested, tried and condemned to death, but escaped from prison and made his way to the Low Countries. There he found employment in various schemes. Returning later to Scotland he found useful patronage, and published a couple of much-admired financial treatises. Before Louis XIV. died he submitted to him schemes for the rehabilitation of France's shattered finances, but Louis did not approve of them. At this time, however, he attracted the notice of the Regent, who thought highly of him and employed him when he became Regent to find means of saving the country from a general bankruptcy. Law's first scheme, the founding of a Royal bank, was very successful, but he followed it up with the wildly speculative Mississippi scheme, and its downfall involved that of the bank, and Law was forced to flee from the country. He died in 1729 in poverty.

Wealth comes to Madame.

8th September, 1719, Saint-Cloud.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

My son came to see me last Friday, and he has made me wealthy. He found that my income was insufficient and has increased it by 150,000 francs. As, thank God, I have no debts, that comes in time and in such a manner that it allows me to pass the rest of my life at ease, as they say here.

The Duchesse de Berri left a husband.

8th September, 1719.

The marriage of the Duchesse with that toad¹ is unfortunately quite true. He is not a bad fellow, however, and he is related to the best families. The Duc de Lauzun is his uncle and Biron is his nephew, but all the same he was not worthy of the honour that was done him. He was only a captain in the King's regiment. All the women ran after him. I consider him ugly and repellent, and he looks sickly, as if he had the French disease.

The Mouchy woman was the most despicable favourite I have ever known, and she betrayed, deceived and robbed her Princess. She sprang from a very obscure family, her maternal grandfather having been the controller-general of my husband's household, which is a quite unimportant charge. His name was Forcadel. Her mother was no good either and when she became a widow she lived with a married man for many years. The whole lot of them were rancid butter and rotten eggs. The most extraordinary thing the Mouchy woman did was to rob her lover, the Comte de Riom, to whom the Duchesse de Berri gave large amounts in coin and jewels. He put all this wealth in a casket which he left at Meudon, and his lady-love stole the casket and made off with it, which strikes me as being quite amusing.

¹ De Riom.

Madame's grand-daughter becomes Abbess de Chelles.

17th September, 1719.

I promised to tell you about my expedition to Chelles. I left on Thursday with the Duchesse de Brancas, Madame de Chasteautier and Madame de Ratzamhausen, and we arrived at half-past ten o'clock. My grandson, the Duc de Chartres, had already arrived, and my son came a quarter of an hour later, and then Mademoiselle de Valois. Madame d'Orléans had had herself bled on purpose to avoid having to come. She and the Abbess are not friends, and, moreover, her terrible laziness would have prevented her from bestirring herself and getting up early. We went to the Church, where the Abbess's *prie-Dieu*, which was of violet-coloured velvet covered with golden *fleur-de-lis*, was placed in the nuns' choir. My *prie-Dieu* was next to the railing, and my son and his daughter were behind my chair, because the Princes of the Blood may not kneel on my carpet. That is a privilege reserved for the grandsons of France. All the King's choristers were in the tribune. Cardinal de Noailles said Mass. The altar is very beautiful. It is made with black and white marble with four large black marble pillars. There are four beautiful white marble statues of sainted abbesses. One is so like our Abbess that you would think it really was her portrait, but it was in fact made long before my grand-daughter was born, because she is only twenty-one years of age. Twelve monks of the Order, wearing superb chasubles, served the Mass. After the Cardinal had read the epistle, the master of ceremonies went into the nuns' choir and brought forward the Abbess. She came forward in a dignified manner followed by two abbesses and half a dozen nuns of her Convent. Bowing deeply to the Altar, and to me, she knelt before the Cardinal who was sitting in a large armchair before the Altar. They brought the confession of the faith to her with due ceremony and she read it, and after the Cardinal had recited many prayers, he gave her a book containing the rules of her Convent. Then she returned to her place, and after the *Credo* had been read and the offertory taken, she, accompanied by the Abbess and her nuns, came forward, bringing for an offering two large candles and two loaves of bread, one of which

was gilded and the other silvered. After the Cardinal had communicated, she returned and knelt before him, and he made the sign of the Cross over her. He led her back to her seat, not to her *prie-Dieu*, but to her Abbess's seat, which was a sort of throne surmounted by the canopy of a Princess of the Blood and decorated with fleur-de-lis. As soon as she was seated on it, the trumpets and hautboys struck up, and the Cardinal, followed by all the priests, placed himself near the Altar on the left-hand side, with his cross in his hand, and the *Te Deum* was sung. Then all the nuns came two by two and expressed their submission to their Abbess by making her a deep curtsy. . . .

After the *Te Deum* we went to the Convent, and at half-past twelve we sat down at the table, my son, my grandson, the Duc de Chartres, the Princesse Victoire de Soissons, the young d'Avergne girl, daughter of the Duc d'Albert, and the three ladies who were with me. But the Abbess sat in her refectory at a table set for forty, with her sister, Mademoiselle de Valois, the two ladies who accompanied her, twelve abbesses and all the nuns of the Convent. It was strange to see all those black robes round the table. My son's servants served a very fine meal and the people were allowed to raid the dessert and confectionery after dinner was over. My carriage arrived at a quarter to four o'clock and I returned hither.

Louis XIV. and Law.

19th September, 1719.

The late King would have liked to have employed Monsieur Law to deal with the Finances, but as he was not a Catholic he thought he was not to be trusted.

The Duchesse de Berri's lover and her favourite.

28th September, 1719.

The man with the frog's head¹ was not here when Madame de Berri died. He was with the army commanding a regiment which had been bought for him. . . .

¹ De Riom.

The Mouchy woman is the grand-daughter of the late Monsieur's surgeon. My son made his mother, Forcadel, governess to his eldest daughter and his son, so the little Forcadel was thus brought up with Madame de Berri, who married her to Monsieur de Mouchy, the master of her wardrobe, and gave her lots of money for her dowry. As long as the King lived the Duchess could not see much of her, but after his death, she openly declared her her favourite, and gave her the position of second lady-in-waiting.

Madame and her finances ; a Royal mistress ; Law's bank.

1st October, 1719.

The increase in my pension is very welcome, because after my husband's death I found my means much straightened. The old woman, who detested me as well as my son, pretended that it was the King's express intention to do nothing for me, which was a horrible lie, the proof is that when I hunted out the King and told him that I had not enough to keep up my rank, he immediately increased my pension by 40,000 livres, which made the old woman nearly burst with spite. What amused me was that the Duc and Duchesse du Maine asked my steward how he managed so that I could keep up my rank and not run into debt on the little income I had. Lagarde, for that was my steward's name, replied, "It is because Madame limits herself and never goes in for foolish expenditure." That was a good lesson for the fine couple, because their debts arose from the nocturnal fêtes they used to give at Sceaux, which used to last from the evening till broad daylight, with firework displays, spectacles, operas, feasts, balls, nothing was left out. If my son had not lost his daughter and the King had not received back the wealth she left, I should not have had this increase in my pension, because my son does not wish it said that he enriches his family at the King's expense.

My son is far too soft. When the little Duc de Richelieu said that he had always intended to tell him everything, he believed him and released him, though I must allow with regard to this that the Duke's mistress, Mademoiselle de

Charolais, never gave her father a moment's peace. Nevertheless, it is a horrible thing for a Princess of the Blood to declare openly to all the world that she is in love like a cat, and that the object of her passion is a rascal whose rank is so much below her own that she cannot marry him, and who is, moreover, unfaithful to her, since he has half a dozen other mistresses. When people tell her so she says, "That's all right. He only has mistresses in order to give them away to me, and tell me everything that passes between them and himself." It is truly a horrible affair.

If I believed in magic, I should say that this duke possesses some supernatural power, because he has never approached a woman who has put up the slightest resistance to him. They all run after him, which is very shameful. He is not, when all is said, handsomer than some others, and he is so indiscreet and boastful that he has himself declared that if an empress, beautiful as an angel, were smitten with him and wished to lie with him, but made it a condition that he should say nothing about it, he would rather leave her on the spot and never set eyes on her again in his life. He is very cowardly and insolent, heartless and soulless. It sickens me to think that he is the darling of so many ladies, and I am convinced that he will repay my son's kindness with ingratitude. But I don't want to talk about this person any longer; he makes me bad tempered.

The evil they are saying about Monsieur Law and his bank is due to jealousy, because no one could suggest anything better. He pays the late King's dreadful debts and lessens taxation, thus lightening the burden which is weighing down the people. Wood costs only half what it did, and the import duties on wine, meat, and everything consumed in Paris have been abolished. This causes great joy amongst the people, as you can easily imagine. Monsieur Law is very polite. I am greatly taken with him and he does all he can to please me. He refuses to act in secret, as those did who had control of the finances before him, but does everything publicly and honourably. It is quite untrue that he has bought one of the Duchesse de Berri's palaces. She never had one, so it would be impossible for her to sell it. All the residences she had, namely Meudon, Chaville and La Muette, have been returned to the King,

who has lodged his menagerie at La Muette. There he has cows, sheep and other animals.

Terrible maladies, such as small-pox, measles and fiery fever are doing a great deal of mischief at Paris, but in every corner of Europe nothing else is talked of. They say that there is plague at Mannheim which is doing a great deal of damage.

The mysterious Persian Ambassador.

1st October, 1719.

People don't agree here that the Ambassador of Persia was an imposter. He was a shabby-looking man, to be sure, but he had lots of wit. His audience was very magnificent. There was a married woman who was pregnant through his fault, and after making her abjure Christianity, he had her shut up in a case. Her husband was not a reputable person either, being a bastard of my son's chief almoner, the Abbé de Grancey, who always kept a sort of harem in his house. The Ambassador forbade anyone to open the box, which was pierced with air holes, and in which he kept the woman packed; saying that there were in the case books written by the Prophet Mahomet, which would be soiled if Christians happened to touch them. But no attention was paid to his commands and the lady was discovered. People say that he was given ten thousand golden *louis*, but I don't believe that.

The popularity of John Law.

6th October, 1719.

Law is so run after that he has no rest day or night. A Duchess kissed his hands before everyone, and if duchesses kiss his hands, what parts of him won't the other ladies salute? . . .

An old rumour denied.

8th October, 1719.

It is not true that the Queen¹ gave birth to a negress. The late Monsieur, who was present, used to say that the little princess was ugly, but not black, but the people can never get it out of their heads that the child is not still alive and in a convent at Moret, near Fontainebleau. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the ugly baby died, everybody at Court saw her die.

Protection for Protestants.

14th October, 1716.

The King of England and the King of Prussia have determined, according to what I have been told, to defend the cause of the Protestants strenuously. So the priests will no longer be able to annoy them, which makes me very glad, because I desire all sorts of good and happiness for our brave compatriots. As for the cursed priests who persecuted them, I should like to see ropes round their necks. They have well deserved that on account of their falseness and treachery.

The late King's table.

15th October, 1719.

As a general rule, the King had no one with him at table, except perhaps the members of the Royal family. There were so many Princesses of the Blood that the ordinary table would not have been large enough. It was quite full as it was when we were all there. The King sat in the middle with the Dauphin and the Duc de Bourgogne on his right, and on his left the Dauphiness and the Duc de Berri. At one end sat the late Monsieur and myself, and at the other end my son and his wife. The rest of the table was

¹ This was a very persistent rumour about Queen Marie-Thérèse.

left for the gentlemen who wait on us at table, because those who serve the King do not stand behind him but in front of him. When the Princesses of the Blood and other ladies ate at the King's table, it was not the gentlemen, but other officers of the King's household who waited on us, and they stood behind us like pages. In this case the King was served by his chief steward. The pages only waited on the King's table when he was travelling, and then they did not wait on the Royal family. They were served by people who were not gentlemen. Formerly all the King's officers such as the cup-bearers, and servers of the dessert, etc., were gentlemen, but since the nobility has become impoverished and all the charges cost so much, it has been necessary to take suitable commoners who have money.

Madame's impressions of Law.

16th October, 1719.

Monsieur Law is a clever and honourable man. He is extraordinarily civil and courteous to everyone, and is a man of the world. He doesn't speak French at all badly, and better than Englishmen usually do.

Madame on the death of her old enemy.

19th October, 1719.

TO MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

God Almighty delivered France from a wicked beast of prey when He took off the wicked Scarron woman. I cannot say that He has taken her unto Himself, that seems to me very doubtful. . . .

A story of the famous Duc de Sully.

20th October, 1719.

The Duc de Sully was sometimes very absent-minded. One day he was dressing to go to Church and remembered



JOHN LAW.

everything except his breeches. It was winter-time, and as he entered the Church he said, "Good Heavens, how cold it is to-day!" Someone replied, "No colder than usual." "Perhaps I am feverish then," he said. Someone asked, "Don't you think it may be because you are not as warmly clad as usually?" and he lifted up the Duke's coat and let him see what was missing.

The physician's investments.

20th October, 1719.

Chirac,² the physician, was called to a lady who was ill. While he was in the ante-chamber he was told that the stock had gone down considerably. The physician, who had a good many Mississippi shares, was shocked at the news, and as he sat beside the invalid feeling her pulse, he murmured, "Good Lord, it's going down, it's going down." When she heard him speaking thus the sick lady began to cry. Her servants rushed to her and she said, "I am going to die. Monsieur Chirac shouted three times when he was feeling my pulse, 'It's going down.'" The doctor recollected himself and said, "You are dreaming, your pulse is splendid, and you are quite well. I was thinking of the Mississippi shares on which I am losing because they are going down." The invalid was thus reassured.

The Regent's unlucky date.

24th October, 1719.

For the last forty years the month of October has never passed without my son finding himself towards the 22nd in trouble of one sort or another. That dates from his bad accident. . . .

Although he is Regent, he never comes into my presence or leaves it without coming to kiss my hand before I embrace

¹ Chirac was born in 1650, died in 1732, was first doctor to the Duc d'Orléans, having accompanied him on his campaigns to Italy and Spain. Later he became chief doctor to Louis XV.

LETTERS OF MADAME

him. He does not seat himself before me, but otherwise he doesn't stand on ceremony and gossips away freely. We laugh and joke together like the good friends we are.

The Canon and Monsieur.

26th October, 1719.

A Prince should understand that true piety consists in care in keeping his word and governing with justice and wisdom and whoever advises him to the contrary is a bad counsellor. That recalls a dialogue which I once heard at Saint-Cloud which amused me. A canon, who was a good but stern man, came into Monsieur's cabinet, and Monsieur, who sometimes used to amuse himself playing the hypocrite, said to him, "I am very thirsty, would it be breaking my fast if I took the juice of an orange?" Monsieur Feuillet (as the canon was called) replied, "Oh, Monsieur, eat an ox if you like, but pay your debts and be a good Christian!" . . .

The worthy Mr. Law was taken seriously ill a few days ago as a result of the worry and work with which he is overwhelmed. People do not leave him a moment's rest. You can't imagine what a selfish race the French are.

The road to ruin.

13th November, 1719, Paris.

I am very angry because yesterday evening I heard that my son and Madame d'Orléans have allowed their son to go to that accursed ball at the Opera. That is the way to destroy the body and soul of a boy who is at present very good. Going to a ball at the Opera is the same as going to a bad house. When I returned from Church, I met the young Grand-prior, who is known as the Chevalier d'Orléans. He has come from Malta where he has taken his final vows, so he cannot now marry. My son's race on the left hand will have no offspring, because the Abbot will be made a priest, for which he has no great inclination.

LETTERS OF MADAME

I am very sorry, as he is a charming and good boy. He looks like the late Monsieur, but has a better figure, and is a head taller than his father.

The rush to Paris.

21st November, 1719, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am so tired of hearing people speak of nothing but stocks and millions, that I cannot conceal my bad temper. . . . People are coming here from every corner of Europe, and since last month they reckon that there have been 250,000 people more than usual in Paris. Rooms have had to be built above the warehouses, and Paris is so full of carriages that there is great confusion in the streets and many people have been crushed. A lady meant to say to Mr. Law, "Make me a concession," and she shouted in a loud voice, "Oh, sir, make me a conception." Mr. Law replied, "Madam, you have come too late. I cannot now."

Stories about Law.

29th November, 1719.

The story of Mr. Law's coachman is quite true. He presented two other coachmen to his master, and when the latter asked whether they were good ones, he replied, "They are so good that the one you don't engage I'll take for myself." Hundreds of stories of the same sort are being invented and nothing else is thought of but Mr. Law's Bank.

A lady who could not manage to get near him adopted a singular method of getting speech with him. She ordered the coachman to upset her before Mr. Law's door, and he ran out to her cries, imagining that she had broken her neck or leg, but she proceeded to say that it was only a ruse she had thought of.

Another lady, who is called Madame de Boucher, thought of another method. She had spies who told her what Mr. Law was doing, and learning that he was going to dine with

Madame de Simiane (one of the Duchesse d'Orléan's ladies-in-waiting), she hired men to shout fire in the middle of the meal; all the guests left the table, Mr. Law having descended into the courtyard to see where the fire was, Madame Boucher sprang upon him, as it were, and told him that it was a trick on her part to enable her to speak to him and ask him for shares.

The betrothal of Mademoiselle de Valois.

30th November, 1719.

To-day I can tell you some news that gives me great pleasure, to wit, the betrothal of Mademoiselle de Valois with the Prince of Modena. A courier set out yesterday for Rome to ask for a dispensation because they are related in the second degree. The bride is disconsolate as she would have liked to marry her cousin, the Comte de Charolais,¹ but he did not want her, because all relations in the Royal Family hate each other like the devil. . . .

The results of speculation.

3rd December, 1719.

Mademoiselle de Valois is beginning to console herself a little since she has seen the beautiful clothes that are being made for her. She is to have forty different dresses, and some beautiful diamonds have been sent from Modena as well. That is consoling.

Everything is terribly dear here, and prices have doubled. Large quantities of diamonds and jewels have been sent to Paris from England, and people who have gained enormously on the shares buy them without bargaining. Many funny stories are going about. A few days ago a lady, Madame Bégon, was at the opera. She saw, entering a box, a lady who was extremely ugly, but was clothed in the most beautiful stuffs imaginable and covered with diamonds.

¹ Son of the Duc de Bourbon.

Madame Bégon's daughter said to her, "Look at that lady who is so dressed up, Mother. I think it is our cook, Marie." The mother replied. "Hush, daughter, it can't possibly be." "But look well at her." "I don't know what to think," said the mother, "she is extraordinarily like her——" "Well, what about it? I am Marie, Madame Bégon's cook; I have become rich, and I dress up out of my wealth. I owe nothing to anyone. I like dressing up, so I dress up. That hurts no one. What objection can you have to that?" You can imagine how people laughed. There are hundreds of similar stories.

Fortunes are being made.

5th December, 1719.

Monsieur le Duc and his mother, as well as his boon companion Lassay, have gained several millions. The Prince de Conti has gained less, but still his profits are supposed to reach several millions. The two cousins never stir from the rue Quincampoix,¹ which has given rise to the following epigram:—

Prince, dites-nous vos exploits,
Que faites-vous pour votre gloire?
Taisez-vous, sots! Lisez l'histoire
De la rue Quincampoix.

But it is that d'Antin fellow who is so dreadfully self-seeking who has made most.

The false wealth of France.

7th December, 1719.

It is inconceivable what immense wealth there is in France now. Everybody speaks in millions. I don't understand it at all, but I see clearly that the god Mammon reigns an absolute monarch in Paris.

¹ Headquarters of Law's Bank.

Madame's failure to help her country.

9th December, 1719.

I see now only too plainly that God never meant me to do any good in France, because, in spite of all my efforts, I have never been able to be of any use to my country. It is true I came to France simply out of obedience to my father, my uncle and my aunt, the Electress of Hanover. My inclinations didn't lead me there at all.

The Duc de Bourbon flourishes.

12th December, 1719.

Mr. Law is not the only person who has bought beautiful jewels and possessions. Monsieur le Duc is becoming fabulously wealthy, as well as everyone else who has shares.

How Madame checked a malicious tongue.

13th December, 1719.

Madame de Fiennes was very witty, and loved raillery. Her tongue spared no one but me. When I saw that she spared no one in her talk, not even the King, nor Monsieur, nor anyone whatsoever, I took her one day by the hand and leading her into a corner I said to her, "Madam, you are charming, you are witty, but you have a way of speaking which the King and Monsieur put up with because they are used to it. I, however, have just arrived and am not used to it, I get vexed when anyone mocks at me, that is why I want to give you a little warning. If you spare me, we shall get on very well together, but if you treat me as you do other people, I shall say nothing to you, but I will complain to your husband, and if you don't mend your ways I shall dismiss him." He was my Master of the Horse. She promised never to say anything about me, and she kept her word. Monsieur used often to say, "Whatever do you do that Madame de Fiennes never says anything

nasty about you ? ” I would reply, “ It is because she likes me.” I would never say what I had done or he would have turned her against me.

George I. returns from Osnabrück.

14th December, 1719.

To MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

The King of England ¹ arrived safely and in good health at London, but I pity the Prince of Wales from the depths of my heart. He thought he was being very polite when he sent a page to his father, the King, to compliment him in the most submissive terms on his safe arrival ; but not only would the King not receive his message, but still worse, he sent away the young gentleman with much abuse, and withdrew the permission that the Prince had had before the King’s journey of seeing his daughter whom he loves dearly. I think that was very cruel, and one would think the King belonged to the Czar’s race rather than that of Brunswick and the Palatinate. Such behaviour will do the King no good.

A charming Stuart.

17th December, 1719.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

There is not a word of truth in what the papers say about the Chevalier de Saint-Georges having written to me, but it is a fact that I am inexpressibly distressed about him, because he is the best fellow in the world. He is gentle and courteous and he does not deserve all the misfortunes that are crushing him.

I don’t think there has ever been so much malice and wickedness about as there is nowadays, which is a proof of the old German proverb that “ Where the devil cannot go himself he sends an old woman,” because all our trouble is due to the old Maintenon woman who has just died at the age of eighty-four years, and to the Princesse des Ursins

¹ George I.

who is seventy-seven. These two old witches, as the Grand-duchesse calls them, had sworn to ruin my son, the former on account of her affection for the Duc du Maine, whom she wished to place upon the throne. The other had, however, no motive for hating my son except that he considered her too old to play the gallant with her, wherefore she vowed him her undying hatred.

Mademoiselle de Valois is certainly more beautiful than her sister, the Abbess de Chelles, but the latter is incomparably more agreeable. She has a charming laugh and the most beautiful teeth, which can be compared without exaggeration to a row of pearls. She is well made and not too small. Although she stutters slightly it is not unbecoming. She speaks and laughs quite naturally, without affectation or effort, and she is frank and natural. She says what she thinks, whilst her sister is double-faced and secretive. I can't stand that and confess that I wish she were already in Modena. It is quite true that the Comte de Charolais is going to wed a princess of Modena. If she is a sinner her penance will be severe, because I know the aforesaid person, and, unless I am greatly mistaken, his wife is going to be the most miserable soul in the world. So I am very sorry for her.

They put lots of things in the papers that are not true, and what they say about the Duc de Chartres is quite untrue. Mademoiselle de Valois would flee to the antipodes, as the expression is, rather than meet him. It is her half-brother, the grand-prior and general of the galleys, who is to take her to Modena, in the King's galleys.

How a State secret was given away.

24th December, 1719, Paris.

Monsieur Marion has given me your letter of the 9th of this month, which has not come very quickly, since it has taken a fortnight. He has also given me the book of the *Dialogues des morts* . . . one of them made me laugh. It was the one between Monsieur de Turenne and Madame de la Vallière. If they had substituted Madame

de Coetquen, they would have been able to tell the whole story of the treaty that Madame¹ negotiated between her brother, the King of England, and the late King, of which the secret was made known through the indiscretion of Turenne. In spite of his age, he was head over heels in love with Madame de Coetquen, who was always with Madame and was very much in her good graces, although she was not worthy of so being, since she was in love with the Chevalier de Lorraine, who was Madame's most bitter enemy, and who in order to worm his secrets out of him encouraged his mistress to be kind to her old adorer. Madame de Coetquen had failed to get the secret of the Treaty out of Madame, but Turenne was too much in love with her to hide anything from her, and he told her the secret. She passed it on to the Chevalier, who told Monsieur, who was very much vexed with his wife and the King, and flew into a rage with them. Madame told the King that the Chevalier de Lorraine had got her into trouble with her husband and the Chevalier was sent into exile. . . .

This is ancient history, but quite true, although it sounds like a romance. So you see that, if instead of Madame de la Vallière they had imagined a dialogue between Madame de Coetquen and Turenne, they would have been able to tell us something piquant and curious, but few people know these details. My information came from a trustworthy source, because it came from the King and Monsieur. . . .

An Englishman speaks French.

26th December, 1719.

Cardinal Mazarin sent Boisrobert one day to pay his compliments to the English Ambassador. When he arrived at the Embassy, he said : "The Cardinal sends me here to see the Ambassador and his wife, and to pay them his compliments." The Englishman who had received them replied, "My lord il est prêt, My lady il n'est pas prêt, friselire ses cheveux, prendre patience."

¹ Madame Henrietta.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Law is run after.

29th December, 1719.

It is comical how every one runs after Monsieur Law and how they jostle each other just to catch a glimpse of him or his son.

CHAPTER XII

1720.

Philip V. of Spain.

2nd January, 1720.

The King of Spain has to know people very well before he will say even a few words to them. If you want him to speak to you, you must tease and stir him up a little or he will say absolutely nothing. I have often seen Monsieur very much annoyed because the King would not chat with him or even address a single word to him. Monsieur took no pains to make himself agreeable to him before he was a king, but afterwards he would have liked the Prince to address him, which did not suit that monarch.

It was quite the reverse with me. At the *apartments*, at table, at the play, we were always seated next to each other. He used to love to hear stories and I used to tell them for whole evenings at a time, which made him feel at ease with me. I have often laughed at the reply he made to me when I said, "Talk to your great-uncle a little, Sir, he is quite put out because you never speak to him." He replied: "What have I to say to him? I hardly know him."

Madame du Maine set at liberty.

5th January, 1720.

After the avowals which Madame du Maine made on the subject of the conspiracy, which she put in writing, my son ordered her to be set at liberty and let her return to Sceaux. She is very much upset because her letters were read in the open Council. Since she declared in her deposition that she had done everything without her

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husband's knowledge, although in his name, he has been allowed to return to his estate at Chavigny near Versailles.

Madame was inquisitive as a child.

9th January, 1720.

I have often walked at night in the Gallery at Fontainebleau, where they say that the spirit of the late King Francis I. returns, but the dear King never did me the honour of showing himself to me. Perhaps he didn't find my prayers efficacious enough to bring him out of purgatory, which would, in fact, be probable.

I was very giddy in my youth, which is the reason I was called *Rauschen petten knecht* in German. I remember the birth of the King of England as if it were yesterday. I was an inquisitive and mischievous child. They put a doll in a rosemary bush and tried to make me believe that it was the child which had just been born to my aunt. At the same moment I heard loud cries, because the Duchess was in travail. That didn't agree with the story of the baby in the rosemary bush, so I pretended to believe them; but I slipped into my aunt's room, as if I were playing at hide and seek with young Bulau and Haxthausen, and hid behind a large screen which had been placed before the door near the fireplace. They brought the baby over to the fireplace to bathe it and I came out of my hiding-place. I should have been whipped, but in honour of the happy event I was only well scolded.

Law becomes a Catholic.

24th January, 1720.

Monsieur Law has abjured his faith at Melun. He has become a Catholic and his children too. His wife is very much upset about it. . . . He is not avaricious and gives lots of alms that are never talked about. He also gives away large sums of money and helps many poor people.

Alberoni seeks pardon.

26th January, 1720, Paris.

. . . . Alberoni has written to my son to beseech his forgiveness. He declares that all the libels which were spread against him in Spain were sent from Paris and offers to reveal everything to my son, and to give my son the means of making himself master of the whole of Spain, because he knows the strength and weakness of the kingdom. Doesn't that show him to be an infamous scoundrel. . . .

Lord Stair's hatred for Law.

27th January, 1720.

My son was asking for a certain duchess who was going with his daughter as far as Genoa, and someone who was standing near said, "Sire if you want your choice of duchesses, go to Madame Law's house, and you will find them all gathered there." . . .

Lord Stair cannot conceal his hatred of Law, nevertheless he has made three good millions through him.

Madame is suspicious of Alberoni's arrest.

18th February, 1720.

I was afraid that Alberoni's arrest was only a farce arranged between him and the Pope, but it appears to be quite serious. His papers were signed in Spain, and they found proof of the plots he was engaged in against the Pope, who was frightened by them. He was extremely angry and had Alberoni arrested and shut up at Rome, where he will receive due punishment for his crimes.

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The Regent is glad to get rid of Lord Stair.

20th February, 1720.

I don't think Lord Stair will continue to praise my son so much as he began by doing, because they don't appear to be at all friendly. After my son had done everything he could to please him, and had made him richer than he could ever have hoped to be in his life, he has turned his back on him and is giving him all the trouble he can. He has worried my son so much that he is very glad to be rid of him. . . .

Law's friends are hustled by the mob.

25th February, 1720.

Monsieur le Duc has been man-handled by the populace, who look upon him as a good friend of Law's. They say all sorts of abusive things about him and treat him like a dog, and they followed his brother, the Comte de Clermont, on the *pont Royal*, shouting, "Away with you, dog, you are no better than your brother." His governor got down from the carriage and tried to address the people, but they threw stones at him, and he had to get into the carriage again and drive away as quickly as possible.

Law becomes hated.

30th March, 1720.

. . . . Many stories about banknotes are heard these days. I think it hard lines that there is no more gold to be seen, because for forty-eight years now I have never been without some beautiful gold pieces in my pocket, and now there is nothing to be had but silver coins of very little value. Monsieur Law is certainly terribly hated. My son

told me something in the carriage to-day which touched me so deeply that tears came to my eyes. He said :—

“The people are saying something which moves me and I appreciate it very much.”

I asked him what it was, and he told me that when the Count was put on the wheel,¹ the people said, “When anything is done against the Regent’s own person he forgives it, but when it is a question of something against us, he will have no joking and sees that we have justice.”

Monsieur Law has no bad intentions. He buys estates and thus shows that he intends to remain in the country. I don’t believe that he is sending money to England, Holland and Hamburg. I think I said before that what passed between the Pope and Alberoni was a put-up job between them. Well, as I foretold, he has been set at liberty again.

Madame writes to Philip V. of Spain.

6th April, 1720, Paris.

To the KING OF SPAIN.

Yesterday I received with respect and joy the letter which Your Majesty did me the honour of writing me on the 15th March. Although I would have dearly liked to have made known to Your Majesty my sorrow at the loss which you sustained in the death of the little Don Phillippe, to whom I had the honour of being godmother, I did not dare to write without Your Majesty’s permission. I will speak no more of it for fear of recalling sad memories. Rather will I rejoice with Your Majesty over the birth of the Prince who has just been born to the Queen of Spain. God keep him and all the Royal Family, and bless you all more and more. I beg Your Majesty to continue your kindness and to be sure that the interruption in our correspondence has not changed my respect and affection for Your Majesty, which will last as long as I live.

¹ Antoine-Joseph, Comte de Horn, aged twenty-two, was guilty of a cold-blooded murder for money.

Lord Stair has a rival in Maurice of Saxony.

14th April, 1720.

Lord Stair is violently smitten with a mistress called Madame Raymond. She is more pleasant than beautiful and has been the mistress of the Elector of Bavaria. Nowadays she has another lover who causes Milord much heart-burning. The lover I mean is Count Maurice of Saxony,¹ who is not handsome, but is young, seductive and pleasant looking. Lady Stair is thus avenged for her husband's infidelity.

Alberoni has gone to the Abbey of Saint-Gall in Switzerland. Time will certainly show whether he has gone there for the purpose of restarting his diabolical tricks.

That wicked little witch, the Duchesse du Maine, is coming to see me to-morrow. I could have dispensed with her visit, but I could not refuse to see her after my son has received her.

A shameless woman.

19th April, 1720.

That large-sized strumpet of a Polignac woman tried to seduce the Duc de Chartres, as well as his brother on the left hand, the Grand Prior. The latter was going with his governor to Versailles, and slipped off to go and hunt up that woman. When he arrived she was actually in bed with another wretch, but she got up and went to lie with the newcomer. When my son heard about it he was going to have the young rascal arrested and taken to the Bastille, but warned by one of his friends, who arrived during the night, he had already fled. He wrote a very humble letter to my son imploring his pardon.

I no longer have any circle because foot-stool ladies very seldom come to see me, since they cannot make up their minds to appear otherwise than in *robes battantes*. I invited

¹ Afterwards the famous Marshal Saxe.

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them, as usual, to be present at the audience I was giving to the Ambassador from Malta, but only one put in an appearance. When the late King and Monsieur were still alive, they used to come eagerly to my audiences, and if enough of them did not come, Monsieur used to threaten to complain to the King.

Why should I worry my son to make him recognise his abbot? That would let him in for a great deal of bother, because he has many children by the Parabère woman. She would want them to be recognised as well. That reason restrains me.

Death of the Duchesse de Bourbon.

26th April, 1720.

Monsieur le Duc will not be able to enjoy the pleasure which he would have felt at his wife's death, because she left everything to her sister, Mademoiselle de la Roche-sur-Yon, and since, according to the custom in Paris, the husband and wife hold their property in common, Monsieur le Duc will have to hand over half of what he gained from the Bank.

George I. is reconciled with his son.

27th April, 1720.

People don't know how to behave at Court any longer. No ladies will come to see me now, because I will not allow them to appear before me as they do before Madame d'Orléans, without stays and wearing scarves and loose gowns. I cannot and will not stand that. I would rather see no one than permit such familiarity.

I have written to Abbé Dubois, who is now Archbishop of Cambrai, to thank him for having sent me by an express messenger the news that a reconciliation has taken place between the King of England and his children, and that all members of the Prince's party have been allowed to kiss the King's hand.

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Law goes in fear of his life.

31st May, 1720.

My son has been forced to deprive Law, who was formerly worshipped as a god, of his charge. He has had to be given guards and his life is not safe. It is dreadful to see in what a terrible state of fear the man is.

Madame du Maine is estranged from her husband.

4th June, 1720.

Madame du Maine has not yet appeared at the play which shows that she is not yet reconciled to being in disgrace with her husband. It is said that she has written to him but that he sent back the letter without opening it.

She came to see my son a few days ago to beg him not to dissuade her husband from making up his quarrel with her. My son began to laugh and replied, "I shall not interfere, because I have learnt from Sganarelle that it is not wise to put one's finger between the tree and the bark." In Paris people think they will become reconciled. If that happens, I shall say, as His Highness, my father, often used to, "*Accordez-vous, canailles.*"

Law and the control of the finances.

4th June, 1720.

Law is no longer Controller-general¹ but he is still director-general of the Bank and of the *Compagnie des Indes*.

. . . Councillors have been put over him who supervise everything that is done at the Bank.

¹ Of the Finances.

The Regent's relaxation.

11th June, 1720.

The working people no longer want to work, and they put a price on their goods three times higher than they are now worth because of the banknotes. I have often wished that these banknotes were consigned to hell-fire. They are more of an anxiety than a comfort to my son, and it is impossible to describe all that has resulted from them. My son spares himself no trouble, but, after he has worked from morning to night, he likes to seek relaxation by supping with his little black crow.¹ . . .

Financial panic reigns in Paris.

12th June, 1720.

Judging from the universal uproar, it seems that things are going terribly badly. I should like to see Law go to the Devil with his system, and wish that he had never set foot in France. . . .

Law's friends.

14th June, 1720.

The Duc d'Antin, Law's great friend, wanted to have his position as director of the Bank. . . . Monsieur le Duc began by speaking against Law, but four millions made him declare himself in his favour. . . . Monsieur Law is as frightened as possible ; my son is not in the least intimidated and in spite of the threats which are being hurled at him, laughs fit to make himself ill at Law's cowardice.

¹ The Regent's name for Madame de Parabère.

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Madame knows her end is near.

23rd June, 1720.

To MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

I am firmly persuaded that my days are numbered and I never give the matter a moment's thought. I leave everything in the hands of God, the All Powerful, and I do not worry about what the result may be, because it would be very foolish for men and women to imagine that all human beings are not alike in the eyes of God, and that He will do anything special for them. Thank God, I am not so presumptuous nor prideful. I know myself and have no illusions on the subject.

Dukes who turned merchants.

27th June, 1720.

Three dukes, belonging to the highest families, have done something which I consider degrading. The Duc d'Antin who is the son of the Montespan woman, and consequently the step-brother of my daughter-in-law and Madame la Duchesse, the Duc d'Estrées, and the Duc de la Force ; the first one has bought up all the cloth, in order to sell it more dearly ; the second all the coffee and chocolate ; and the third has done even worse because he has bought up all the candles and has made them exorbitant in price. The other day, as he was coming out of the Opera, some young fellows began to follow him singing the chorus from the Opera Phaeton :—

“ Allez, allez répandre la lumière ;
Puisse un heureux destin
Vous conduire à la fin
De votre brillante carrière . . .
Allez, allez répandre la lumière.” . . .

A riot at the Palais-Royal.

18th July, 1720.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Before I reply to your kind letter, my dear Louisa, I must tell you what a horrible fright I had yesterday. I

went in my carriage as usual to the Carmelite Convent, where I visited Madame du Lude. We were having a very peaceful time, when Madame de Chasteauthier arrived, as pale as a corpse, and said to me, "I can't conceal from you what has happened, Madame. You will find the courtyard at the Palais-Royal filled with people. They have taken thither the bodies of some people who were crushed to death at the Bank. Law has been obliged to flee to the Palais-Royal. His carriage was smashed into a thousand pieces and the doors have been broken open?" I leave to your imagination what sort of an impression such news made on me, but nevertheless I gave no sign of my feelings, because in such a case it doesn't do to show a lack of courage. I had myself driven to the Palais Royal as usual. There was such confusion in the Rue Saint-Honoré that it was half an hour before I could pass. I heard people abusing Law, but they said nothing about my son and gave me their blessing. At length I arrived at the Palace, but all was quiet there and the crowd had withdrawn. My son came to visit me and assured me that all the fuss had been caused by some drunk people. The people who were suffocated had not been driven to demand repayment of the notes by extreme distress. One of them had a hundred crowns in his pocket and none of those who were arrested were without money. The invasion of the Palais-Royal was the work of some ruffians who have a mortal hatred for my son.

Madame and a Painter.

4th August, 1720, Saint-Cloud.

You are mistaken in thinking that I never sing Lutheran hymns and psalms. I often sing them and find them very soothing. I must tell you what happened with regard to this one day more than twenty-five years ago. I had no idea that Monsieur Rousseau, who painted the Orangery, belonged to the Protestant Church. He was at work upon some scaffolding and I, believing myself to be quite alone in the gallery, began to sing the Sixth Psalm. Hardly had I finished the first verse when I saw someone descend from the scaffolding in great haste and throw himself at my feet. It was Rousseau. I thought he had gone mad.

“Good Heavens !” I said to him, “what is the matter with you, Rousseau ?” and he replied, “Can it be, Madame, that you still remember and sing our old psalms ? May God bless you, and preserve you in the right faith.” Tears stood in his eyes. He left a few days later and I do not know what became of him, but, wherever he may be, I wish him all sorts of happiness and prosperity because he was a very good man and an excellent painter of frescoes.

There are very few ancient coins that I do not already possess, because I have nearly nine hundred of them. I began with two hundred and sixty which I bought and which had been stolen from the Duke of Savoy. I wrote to the then reigning Queen of Sardinia, and offered to return them to the King. The Queen replied that she was charmed to have the opportunity of asking me to keep those which had come into my possession. I got them cheaply merely buying them by the weight, and there were some rare ones amongst them.

The hoarding of gold.

8th August, 1720, Saint-Cloud.

I have neither good nor evil to say about Monsieur Law's system, because it is quite incomprehensible to me, but when I see all the worry and harm it has brought my son, I could wish that it had never been thought of. When people are as self-interested as the French are, from Monsieur le Duc down to the meanest lackey, one is never safe when there is anything to be gained by one's death. For which reason I am very anxious, and alarmed for my son's life. As far as I myself am concerned I have nothing to dread, because my death would benefit no one. Would to God that I had only myself to worry about. I should not have a moment's fear.

There is still a great deal of money in France, but every one conceals it from selfishness, and won't put it into circulation. They take no notice of the laws Monsieur Law made on the subject. No one has any taste for war here, but they are very fond of luxury, which has never been indulged in to such an extent as it is at present. Time will show what will be the result.

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Law suffers from fright.

17th August, 1720.

Law is like a dead man and his face is as white as a sheet. He has not been able to get over the latest frights he has had.

. If Monsieur le Duc is detested, it is only because he was a good friend of Law's, whose children he took to Saint-Maur and is keeping there.

The market women besiege Law in his house.

18th August, 1720, Saint-Cloud.

All is quiet here still, but Monsieur Law dare not stir out of his house. The women from the market have placed little boys as spies all round his house in order to know when he comes out. That doesn't promise well for him, and I am afraid there may be a new uprising.

Tricks played by lightning.

21st August, 1720, Saint-Cloud.

Never in my life have I seen any English or Scotchman so cowardly as Law. Prosperity must have taken away his courage, because it is not easy to give up one's possessions. I expect there are times when he wishes he were on the Mississippi or in Louisiana.

It thunders every day just now, but it does nothing but amuse itself. It took all the hair off a man's body without doing him the least harm. It broke the handle of a sword that a horseman had at his side and he was not even scratched. A veteran officer was wearing a blue coat with silver buckle and buttons, and the lightning took off the buckle and buttons without damaging the cloth. The peasants here think that there are magicians who control the thunder.

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A hunchback's son.

27th August, 1720.

The young Princesse de Conti told me that when he was an infant, she had had her son examined by Clément to see whether he were well formed. Clément found the baby well made. He went to visit the Prince de Conti and said to him, "Sir, I have examined the figure of the newly-born prince, and he is straight, make him sleep without a pillow so that he may remain so, because think what a tribulation it would be to the Princesse de Conti, who has made the Prince straight, if you make him twisted and hunchbacked." The Prince de Conti tried to turn the conversation but Clément kept harping on the subject, "Just think, he is straight as a bulrush, don't make him twisted and bent, Sir." The Prince de Conti could bear it no longer and fled from him.

Madame receives threatening letters.

6th September, 1720, Saint-Cloud.

During the last week I have received several letters threatening to burn me at Saint-Cloud and my son at the Palais-Royal. My son never tells me a word about what is going on here, and in that he follows his father's example. He used to say, "All is well, provided that Madame doesn't know about it." . . .

Anonymous letters and scurrilous verse.

20th September, 1720.

Three days ago I received another anonymous letter which made me laugh heartily, because they advised me to have my son shut up as a lunatic and thus enable his life to be saved. . . . My son has already slept several times at the Tuileries, but I am afraid, nevertheless, that the King will not be able to get used to him, as my son

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has never been able to play with children. He does not like them. Here is a new verse they have published :—

“ Je ne trouve pas étonnant¹
Que l'on fasse un ministre,
Et même un prélat important
D'un masquereau, d'un cuistre ;
Rien ne me surprend en cela,
Et ne sait-on pas comme
De son cheval Caligula
fit un consul de Rome ? ”

The disorderly life of Paris.

27th September, 1720.

TO MONSIEUR HARLING.

The disorderly and frivolous life of Paris becomes more detestable and horrible every day. Whenever it thunders I tremble for this town. . . .

A censorship of Madame's letters.

3rd October, 1720, Paris.

TO THE RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The irregularity of the post is solely due, my dear Louisa, to the animosity of Monsieur de Torcy and the Archbishop of Cambrai, who want to know everything I write, and since they cannot embroil me with my son, they try to make trouble between me and other people. They told the Maréchal de Villeroi that I had written to my daughter that the aforesaid Marshal and all those they call the members of the old Court were my son's enemies. I replied coldly, “ It is quite true that I wrote that to my daughter, and I did so because it is true, as the letters of the Spanish Ambassador amply showed.”

¹ The Abbé Dubois had just been made Archbishop of Cambrai.

The fate of a Lutheran painter.

20th October, 1720, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

. . . . I have discovered that the man Rousseau of whom I told you, and who heard me singing Psalms in the Orangery, has died in Holland. I am sorry for that. . . .

A bored Princess.

12th November, 1720.

The Princess¹ wanders about all day from one room to another lamenting, "How bored I am! Ah, how weary I am here." She is getting on a little better now, however, with her husband than she did at first.

The Grand Dauphin's ghost story.

14th November, 1720.

To MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

The Queen-mother had had a lodging made for herself above the gallery at Fontainebleau, and her chamberwomen had to pass the night in the long gallery. They say that they have seen King Francis walking about, clad in a green-flowered dressing-gown, but he never did me the honour of showing himself to me. I don't think I can be popular with ghosts because I slept for ten years in the room in which the late Madame died, and I was never able to see anything. The first time that the Dauphin slept there his aunt, the late Madame, appeared to him. He told me about it himself. After he had gone to bed he felt a certain need. He got up and putting himself upon the closed chair which was beside his bed, began, pardon me, to satisfy his need. While he was thus engaged, he heard the door leading to the drawing-room open. That evening a great ball had been given in the drawing-room, and he saw a beautifully dressed woman come in, wearing a blue dress, a lovely yellow petticoat and many yellow

¹ Of Modena.

ribbons on her head. Her head was turned towards the window. The Dauphin thought that it was the young Duchesse de Foix, and began to laugh, thinking to himself what a fright the lady would get when she saw him sitting there in his shirt. He coughed in order to make her turn her head and glance in his direction and the lady did so, but instead of the Duchesse de Foix it was the late Madame whom he saw before him, just as he had seen her for the last time. Instead of scaring the lady, he was so frightened that he threw himself with all his might into the bed where the Dauphiness was sleeping. The rough movement wakened her up and she said: "What has happened to make you jump like that?" He replied, "Go to sleep and I'll tell you to-morrow." The Dauphin maintained all his life that this story was true. My opinion about it is that the Dauphin, who was in the habit of remaining for a long time on the closed chair, fell asleep there, and that he saw what he related only in a dream.

What Law has to answer for.

19th November, 1720, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The Mississippi is causing Paris as much trouble as the South Sea did England.

Last week a man threw himself out of a window and broke his neck. I would not like to be in Law's skin. He has too much to answer to God for, having been the cause of so many calamities. If the French take it into their heads to copy the English and destroy themselves, as many will die thus as do of the Plague, because everything is a matter of following the fashion in this country.

Madame de la Fayette.

19th November, 1720.

Madame La Fayette who has written the life of the late Madame¹ was her great friend, but she was an even

¹ *L'Histoire de Henriette d'Angleterre*, published in Holland in 1720.

more intimate friend of Monsieur de La Rochefoucauld, who, to the day of his death, always stayed with her. It is said that these two friends together wrote the romance of the *Princesse de Cleves*.

Madame takes precedence.

23rd November, 1720.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

When my aunt, our dear Electress, was at the Hague, she did not go to see the Princess Royal,¹ but the Queen of Bohemia went and took me with her. Before I departed, my aunt said to me: "Lisette, take care not to do as you usually do and wander off so that you cannot be found. Follow the Queen closely, so that she will not need to wait for you."

I said, "Oh, aunt, you will see that I have behaved very nicely."

I arrived at the house of the Princess Royal, whom I did not know, and there I found her son with whom I had often played. After having looked at his mother for a long time without knowing who she was, I turned round to see if there was someone who could tell me who the lady was. Only seeing the Prince of Orange² I went to him and said, "Please tell me who the lady is who has such a fiery nose!" He began to laugh, and replied, "That is the Princess Royal, my mother." I was flabbergasted and stood stupefied. To help me recover myself, Mademoiselle Heyde took me with the Prince into the Princess's bedroom, where we played all sorts of games together. I had asked them to call me when the Queen was ready to leave, and we were rolling together on a Turkish carpet when I was called. I took one leap, and rushed into the drawing-room, but the Queen was already in the ante-chamber. I was not frightened, however, and pulling the Princess Royal's skirt, made her a pretty curtsy, placed myself before her,

¹ Mary, daughter of Charles I. of England, who married William of Orange.

² Afterwards William III. of England.

and followed the Queen step by step to the carriage. Everyone was laughing and I did not know why. When we returned the Queen went to find my aunt, sat down on her bed, and burst into peals of laughter, and said: "Lisette has had a fine outing," and told her all I had done. Then, my dear Electress laughed more than the Queen. She called me to her and said, "Well done, Lisette, you have revenged us on that haughty princess."

The first Dauphiness's lady-in-waiting.

3rd December, 1720.

Bessola¹ often used to put me in a rage. She used to make me so angry that I couldn't say a single civil word to her, and I should often have told her what I thought of her if I had not seen how much that worried the poor Dauphiness. I spared her on that account, but I said to the Dauphiness, "For your Highness' sake I will not complain, but see that Bessola doesn't make me angry again, because I will not guarantee not to say something disagreeable to her." The Dauphiness thanked me so warmly that I felt more inclined than ever to hold my tongue.

With the exception of the Comte de Toulouse all the children Madame de Montespan had by the King are naturally deformed. The Duc du Maine is hunchbacked, Madame d'Orléans is deformed and Madame la Duchesse limps. Montespan was a good-for-nothing who did nothing but gamble. He was a very self-seeking man, and I expect that he would have kept quiet if the King had given him large sums of money. It was amusing to see him when he and his son D'Antin used to play with Madame d'Orléans and Madame la Duchesse. He would hand the cards so respectfully to the princesses who had passed as his own daughters, and would kiss their hands. It used to amuse even himself, and he always turned round and smiled slightly.

¹ Madame Bessola was the lady-in-waiting and favourite of the Dauphiness.

The King is met on his return home.

6th December, 1720.

When the King returned from a journey we all used to have to gather around his carriage the moment he arrived in order to accompany him to his apartment.

Madame has been a great-grandmother.

14th December, 1720, Paris.

It is sad to find oneself given the title of great-grandparent. I have been a great-grandmother, because the Duchesse de Berri had two daughters and a son all of whom died in infancy. The first was called the Duc d'Alençon, and was a beautiful child, but he only lived three days. I never saw the second daughter, because she died at Rambouillet, where her mother was confined when she was there with the King. If what they say of the Princess of Modena is true, she won't be with child in a hurry, because they say she won't sleep with her husband. She is extremely obstinate, refuses all advice and will only obey her own caprices.

Monsieur Law in hiding.

17th December, 1720.

Monsieur Law is at one of his estates six leagues distant from Paris. Monsieur le Duc, who wished to go to see him, has taken Madame de Prie's postchaise and has dressed his lackeys in grey cloaks, otherwise the people would have treated them badly.

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The Regent threatened with Persian poison.

18th December, 1720.

I have received another letter threatening my son with poison, but when I showed him the wretched thing he only laughed at it and said that Persian poison could not be given to him, and that what they said about it was all a fairy tale. . . .

Parliament will return to Paris to-morrow, a fact which is causing as much joy in Paris as did Law's departure. Abbé de Saint-Albin's mother was very beautiful but she had no intelligence. She was a fool, but to see her with her pretty airs one would have thought that she was very subtle.

A dangerous comedy.

20th December, 1720.

A company of Italian comedians came here who wanted to play a piece called *La fausse hypocrite*. When I heard of their intention, I sent for them and advised them not to play that piece, but it was no use. They played it and made lots of money, but they were very soon sent away. They came back to me and asked me to intercede for them, but I said, "No, why didn't you take my advice?" People say that they represented the old bawd in a most amusing fashion, and I should have loved to have seen the play, but I did not for fear that the old woman would tell the King that I had instigated the whole affair in order to have her mocked at.

Some of Law's friends remain true.

24th December, 1720.

Monsieur Law is at Brussels. Madame de Prie sent him her post-chaise, and when he returned it he wrote to thank

her and sent her a bag containing 100,000 *livres*. Monsieur le Duc gave him relays and sent four of his servants to accompany him.

How Law took leave of the Regent.

27th December, 1720.

When he took leave of my son, Law said to him, "Sire, I have made great mistakes, and I made them because I am only human, but you will find neither malice nor rascality in my conduct." His wife will not leave Paris until all his debts are paid. He owes 10,000 *livres* to the butcher alone.

Madame's American lore.

28th December, 1720, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I cannot imagine why your cousin, Monsieur de Degenfeldt does not remain with the King of Sweden, with whom he is in such favour. It must be because the Swedes will not put up with any stranger. I confess that I do not like the younger members of the princely houses to marry, because that divides families up to infinity, and makes poverty stricken princes. The Landgrave did well to buy back that Indian Prince and Princess of whom you speak and send them again to their own country, but you must know that amongst the savages of America there are neither princes nor nobles, all are equal, they recognise only chiefs who lead them in war and whom they cease to obey as soon as the war is finished. I know all about the savages because I have a chambermaid who married a Frenchman whose property was in Canada, and who spent many years there. She has made me thoroughly conversant with all the customs of the people in that country, and no ship's captain could have anything to teach me.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Here are some more verses that have been made against
Monsieur Law :—

Aussitôt que Law arriva
Dans notre grande ville,
Monsieur le Regent publica
Qu' il serait fort utile,
Pour rétablir la nation,
La faredondaine, la faredondon,
Mais, hélas ! il nous enrichit,
 Biribi,
A la façon de Barbari,
 Mon ami.

Jamais de si barbares lois
N' ont gouverné les hommes,
Qu' il est facheux d' être françois,
Dans lê temps ou nous sommes,
 Tout est confusion,
 La faredondaine, la faredondon,
 Chaque jour un nouvel édit,
 Biribi. . . .

Law, ce fils aîné de Satan,
Nous met tous à l'aumône !
Il nous a pris tout notre argent,
Et n'en rend à personne ;
Mais le Regent, humain et bon,
La faredondaine, la faredondon,
Nous rendra ce qu'on a pris,
 Biribi,
 A la façon de Barbari,
 Mon ami.

CHAPTER XIII

1721.

Madame du Maine's indiscreet letter.

1st February, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am becoming very feeble, and can hardly hold my pen, but what is there to be done? I must place myself in God's hands and submit to His will. I expect I shall finish by shrivelling up like the tortoise I used to keep in my room at Heidelberg. But as long as I live you may be sure, dear Louisa, that I shall love you with all my heart. . . .

My son has shown me a letter that Madame du Maine had written to Cardinal de Polignac which was seized amongst her papers. What a virtuous and estimable person she is to be sure! In one of her fine letters there is the following: "To-morrow we are going to the country. I shall arrange the rooms so that yours will be near mine, try to do as well as last time and we will surrender ourselves to it with joyful hearts."

A nasty trick at a masked ball.

27th February, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

People of quality are much more corrupt these days than the common people. Amongst the latter there is only flirtatiousness or rough but sincere passion, amongst the others it is debauchery, pure and simple, and no one has any shame. The women behave in an even more disorderly fashion than the men.

On the 17th of this month a terrible thing was done at a masked ball. Six masks arrived, of whom two carried

torches and four bore a litter, in which was a masked man wearing a domino. They put him down in the middle of the room and then withdrew. People asked the mask in the litter whether he wanted to dance, but he did not reply. They took the mask off his face and found that it was a corpse.

A better medicine than quinine.

8th March, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

My son behaves very well to me. He treats me with great kindness and would be sorry to lose me. His visits do me more good than quinine, because they rejoice my heart without giving me pains in the stomach. He always has something funny to say to me, and makes me laugh. He is witty and expresses himself very well, and I should be a very unnatural mother if I did not love him with all my heart. . . .

Reflections on old age.

9th March, 1721.

To MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

I can't help knowing that I am approaching the end of my seventieth year, and if I have another stroke such as that which struck me down so severely last year, I shall soon discover what things are like in the other world. My constitution has remained very good, which is plain to be seen from the way I have come through all that has happened to me, but as the French proverb says: "The pitcher goes often to the well, but at last it is broken," which is exactly what will happen to me. Such thoughts, however, cause me no pain, because I know quite well that we are only born into this world to die. I do not think that to live to a great age is very pleasant. One has to suffer too much, and when it comes to pain, I am a great coward.

Three deaths in England.

15th March, 1721.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I have heard not only of the death of Lord Stanhope,¹ which distressed me because of my son whose great friend he was, but also those of two other people, Lord Crofts, who was Secretary of State, and the Duke of Rutland. They died of smallpox. Lord Stanhope died as the result of a horrible orgy he had with four other lords. They have all been at death's door, and two recovered, one because blood burst out of his ears, and the other because a blood vessel burst while he was asleep. I don't understand what pleasure people find in excesses which are really only suitable for beasts. . . .

The vices of a saint.

24th March, 1721.

Saint-François de Sales,² who founded the order of the Daughters of Mary, was friendly in his youth with the Maréchal de Villeroi, father of the present marshal. The marshal could never get used to calling him by the name of saint, and when people mentioned his friend to him he used to say, "I was delighted when I saw that Monsieur de Sales had been made a saint; he used to be so fond of telling dirty stories and cheating at cards. Except for that, however, he is one of the best fellows in the world, although one of the stupidest."

¹ James Stanhope, 1st Earl of Stanhope, 1673-1721. During his career as a soldier, diplomatist and statesman he had spent a great deal of his time in various European countries and had become intimate with the Regent, with whom, moreover, he had many diplomatic dealings. On 4th February, 1721, he was replying in Parliament to a particularly vehement attack upon the Ministers arising out of the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, when he had a stroke and died the next day.

² François de Sales, Bishop of Geneva. He was the author of *Introduction à la vie dévote*, and founded the Order of the Visitation. He died in 1622.

Madame sympathises with other mothers.

27th March, 1721, Paris.

It is not to be wondered at that the Comtesse d'Hohenlohe is angry with her daughter, Madame de Nassau-Seigen, and has disinherited her because of the life she has led. All sorrows are bad for health, but those inflicted by one's children are the most keenly felt of all and cause the greatest suffering. I could say a lot on this subject.

The death of the Pope; an ingenious fraud.

29th March, 1721, Paris.

Yesterday morning a courier arrived to announce the death of the Pope on the 19th of this month. This is very vexatious news for the cardinals, who will have to go to Rome to elect a new Pope. The journey is a costly one and takes them away from Paris where they would rather be. Why, I wonder, do all prelates long to become cardinals and then grumble afterwards when they have to go to Rome.

The Chevalier Shaub arrived here a week ago. He is not English, but a genuine Swiss from Bâle, who is used to dealing with big affairs and is a very clever, as well as good, man. I always talk to him in German, which he speaks fluently. He has another man from Bâle with him as his secretary, but he is not nearly so intelligent. A strange adventure happened to this latter. Mr. Hilton's brother, who is in England, had entrusted to him two hundred and fifty guineas and a letter for his brother, so when the secretary arrived he enquired at the English Embassy where Mr. Hilton lived. They told him the address and added that he lived on the second story. He then proceeded to the address and asked for Mr. Hilton, and a man came to him who said, "I am he. What do you want?" The secretary replied at once that he was instructed to hand him a letter and some money. The man

took them and asked the secretary to do him the honour of supping with him. The invitation accepted, the secretary soon began to feel drowsy, on account of the opium which had been put in his drink. The false Hilton then said to him, "You are too tired to return home, and there is a nice bed here. Sleep for a couple of hours and then go home. I will lock up what you have on you." He had fifty guineas in his pocket as well as two watches, one golden and one silver." Mr. Shaub was very anxious when his secretary did not return and feared that he had been murdered, but the secretary had a negro servant who was very much attached to him and knew that he had gone to Mr. Hilton's house. He went thither and asked what had become of his master, to which they replied that he had gone to bed and had been asleep for several hours. The negro found him and woke him. His clothes had been thrown into the corner of the room, but there was no sign of the valuables they had contained. They searched for the man who lodged in the house, but he had disappeared as soon as the secretary lay down, taking with him the three hundred guineas and the two watches. They proceeded to call on the English ambassador who immediately suspected some fraud and asked what the person who had passed himself off as Mr. Hilton looked like. "He is a little dark man with a pleasant face." The thief is an Englishman whom the ambassador saw daily and who was to have gone with him to Cambrai. His name is Day, and the fraud was an ingenious one and the work of a practised thief.

Duchesse de Bourbon-Condé and her sons.

3rd April, 1721.

The luxury and high play which prevail here are the cause of many of the failures, and debauchery also contributes to them because mistresses and favourites must be paid and that runs away with large sums of money. . . .

The Princes of the house of Condé lost their father while they were young and their mother has never given any thought to the education of her children, and her only idea is to amuse herself; gambling until five o'clock in the

morning, eating a great deal and going to the play. It has simply never occurred to her to look after their education, but they mean to pay her out for it. One day when she was scolding the Comte de Charolais about his disorderly mode of life he replied to her. "Young Lassay¹ can't have done his duty last night, you are in such a bad temper. If you set us a better example we would lead better lives." It is dreadful of a son to speak thus to his mother, but she thoroughly deserves it.

French fashions; the death of the Queen of Denmark.

12th April, 1721, Paris.

I only follow the fashions from afar, and there are some with which I will have nothing to do. Paniers I never wear, and *robes battantes*² I abhor and will not even admit into my presence. To me they seem indecent and look as if one had got straight out of bed. There is no method about the fashions here. Tailors, dressmakers and hair-dressers invent them as they please. I never carried the fashion for high headdresses to excess.

I didn't understand what you said about your neighbours the storks who never let a year pass without returning. They are never seen in France and I beg of you to tell me whether they are to be found in England, because people say that they never remain in one country.

We have just heard of the death of the Queen of Denmark and I shall put on mourning to-morrow, but only for a month. They say that the King was very much upset and that he swooned away after the Queen tried to speak to him, but his show of affection comes rather too late. The

¹ Armand Madaillon de Lesparre, Marquis de Lassay, was at this time sixty-seven years of age. He was a dashing soldier and a clever and charming man. At one time he had been enamoured of the Princess Electoral of Hanover, wife of George I., King of England, but when the affair was discovered he betook himself off, and thus escaped a fate such as befell the Count of Koenigsmarck at a later date.

² Long loose gowns which were introduced by Madame de Montespan in order to conceal her pregnant state. As everyone at Court knew this, they defeated their own object. In the very informal Court of the Regency they became popular, and Madame in one letter complains that few ladies come to visit her because she still insists on ceremonial attire.

poor Queen may have had cause for being jealous of her husband, but in her place I should have been quite happy if he had only agreed to leave me alone. It was impossible for her to have been very fond of him, because he was too stupid and ugly. I can still see him the time he danced with my daughter at Versailles. He didn't know what he was doing and remained standing in the middle of the room, looking up at the ceiling, screwing up his mouth and rolling his eyes. The King said to me: "Go to the rescue of your poor nephew, he has forgotten where he is." I went to him, and led him back to his place, ashamed of him.

Madame still prefers German cookery.

3rd May, 1721, Paris.

With regard to eating and drinking, I am entirely German as I have been all my life. They cannot make good pastry here. Milk and butter are not as good here as they are with us, and are tasteless and watery, nor are the cabbages as good because the soil is not rich. It is light and sandy, with the result that the vegetables have no flavour and the cattle cannot give good milk. Dear God. How I should love to be able to eat the dishes which your cook makes for you. They would be more to my taste than anything my steward prepares for me.

They say in Paris that Madame de Schleunitz's illness is due to her disappointment at having lost everything in Mississippi shares instead of gaining a great deal as she hoped. I am afraid that my heart is not soft enough to let me worry about such unfortunate people. I am rather tempted to laugh at them. The poor lady is horribly ugly and I can never understand how she managed to find two lovers, one after the other, because with her long teeth she resembles a horse which is about to bite.

The debauched youths of France.

26th May, 1721.

All that one reads in the Bible about the excesses that were punished by the Flood and the licentiousness of Sodom

LETTERS OF MADAME

and Gomorrah is nothing to the life that people lead in Paris. Out of nine young men who were dining with my grandson, the Duc de Chartres, the other day, there were seven who had had the French disease. Isn't that horrible?

Sorrows of the Duchesse de Lorraine.

12th June, 1721.

My daughter has hurt her foot and has suffered greatly from it. A large abscess developed which burst and let out a great deal of matter. I have had a letter from her saying how horribly she suffered because it was found necessary to perform a very painful operation on her. The poor woman lives in a state of perpetual trouble. It cannot be pleasant for her to see one of her ladies preferred to herself and receiving more consideration and respect. This woman's husband is the worst rascal in the world and is completely ruining the Duc de Lorraine. My daughter loves her children and cannot endure seeing them impoverished by those wicked Craons. She is very unhappy and I pity her with all my heart.

I know quite well that one has to pay the postage on letters one receives by the post, but it is quite new to pay for those one puts in the post, and I never heard of such a thing in my life.

A precocious child.

14th June, 1721.

The late Duchesse de Nemours brought up a little girl out of charity, who when she was nine years old said to the Duchess, "Madame, no one could be more grateful for your kindness than I am, and I cannot show my gratitude better than by telling every one that I am your daughter, but don't worry, I don't say that I am your legitimate daughter, only your bastard."

*Two bad eggs.**19th June, 1721, Paris.*

Abbé Dubois sent word to me that he never interfered with the post, which was entirely Monsieur de Torcy's affair, but they are both bad eggs and rancid butter. One is no better than the other and they would both be more in their place on the gallows than at Court. They are worthless as the Devil and as false as the wood of the gallows, as Lenore says. If he has the curiosity to read this letter, he will see how I sing his praises and will recognise the truth of our German proverb that eavesdroppers hear no good of themselves.

*A tale of a Carthusian monk.**21st June, 1721.*

As I have no news for you to-day I will tell you an old story of what happened to me the first time I went to Bonnefontaine. I was still quite young, being only twenty-three years of age and a little bit heedless to boot. Going into the convent with poor Theobon, we found a door with the key in the lock and I opened it. We found ourselves in a cell which was occupied by a very tall monk with wild eyes. As soon as he set eyes upon me he threw himself on the ground, seized my two feet and held them so firmly that I could not move. There is nothing of which I am so much afraid as mad people, so you can imagine how frightened I was. I summoned up my courage, however, and said to the lunatic: "Get up, I command you." I was in hunting attire, having just alighted from my horse, and he took me for a man. Theobon was terrified. She said that he was a lunatic and we must call for help. But I thought it better to repeat my orders. The monk let go my feet and I hastily made my escape. Afterwards I only laughed at the adventure. Six years later I again went to Villers-Cotterets, and one morning word was brought that the procurator of the Chartreuse monastery was asking to be presented to me in order to render me, according to custom, the homage of the convent. As soon as he came in I recognised him at

once, although he had become even bigger. His eyes were no longer wild and he looked quite reasonable. After he had paid me his respects he began to smile and said: "I am afraid Your Royal Highness must think me very impudent to dare to appear before you after the dreadful state in which you last saw me, when I gave you such a fright, but it is my duty to come and I must submit to the humiliation of it unless I still inspire Madame with fear." I replied, "No, Father, as long as you speak to me in a reasonable manner as you are now doing, I shall not be afraid of you, but it is quite true that you were very ill when I saw you." He laughed and replied, "It is very good of Madame to try to spare me the shame of having appeared so mad in her eyes." I asked him, "Who cured you?" "The kindness of our superior, who, seeing that lack of society had driven me mad, allowed me to mix with people, and little by little as he saw the beneficial effect it had on my mind, entrusted me with the business affairs of the establishment, which meant that I had to speak with various people every day. This treatment, by the grace of God, restored to me, unworthy that I am, the sound mind that I used to have, so that instead of concealing my old trouble I should publish it abroad in order to show my gratitude to God for having restored me to my senses." I found him so sensible that I talked to him for a long time. He was a very intelligent man and I could not understand how he came to have been so completely mad before. I asked him why he had seized my feet, and he said that his delusion was to believe himself in a strange country, and that when he saw me he thought I was his king and hastened to pay him homage. After laughing with him at his folly I remarked that the rule of his order was too severe. He would not acknowledge it, but shrugged his shoulders and lowered his eyes, so that I could see quite plainly that he agreed with me.

An early suitor of Madame's.

25th June, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It was not the fault of either the Duke or the Duchess of Simmern that I never went to Creutznach, because they

invited me to pay them a visit there, but our father, the Elector, would not permit it, saying that it did not become a young unmarried princess, as I then was, to go on journeys and to visit foreign courts. That was the reason he gave, but I knew that it was really because the Duchess of Simmern led such an irregular life that I could not go. When I knew the Duke of Simmern he had been married to the Princess Mary of Orange for a long time, so he was not eligible for marriage. I was fond of him as a cousin and friend, but I should not have liked to marry him at all, because he did not in the least appeal to me, being small and ugly. Nevertheless, our marriage would have been arranged if the interests of France had not led to other plans. I was then of an age to marry, and the Duke has been dead for forty-three years. God alone knows when I shall follow him, but I shall be content if only Our Lord will protect my children.

The late Princesse d'Epinau was a very unusual woman, and one night when a thief made his way into her room and threatened her with his dagger, saying that she must hand over all her money or he would kill her, she never hesitated, but jumped at his throat, seized his cravat and pulled it so tight that he was almost strangled. At the same time she shouted to her servants. They took away his dagger and led him to the stables, where they began to beat him. "Beat me as much as you like," he cried, "but have pity on me and spare my life." She ordered them to give him a hundred strokes of the rod in her presence, and then told them to release him and let him go. He didn't need to be told twice.

A priest and wedding guests.

4th July, 1721.

A preacher at Rouen was holding forth vehemently against people who go to weddings to amuse themselves, and someone who had heard the sermon said to the preacher, "You preached against those who go to weddings, but Our Lord Himself went to one at Cana in Galilee." The priest replied bluntly, "It is true that He did go to one, but He would have done better not to have gone."

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A rough voyage.

10th July, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

You will know already, my dear Louisa, what good reason you had to be anxious about your relations, because they ran great dangers on their sea voyage. The wind hurled another ship which was coming from Virginia upon their vessel which was mastless. A boat containing six people was between them and broke the shock, which would otherwise have sunk their ship. It was sent to the bottom with all its crew. I am afraid that the fright your niece has had may have done her great harm, because, as you know, she is already pregnant. God grant that all comes right in the end !

It seems to me that the Comte de Degenfeldt ¹ should have put off having children until he was established in his own home, then he would not have exposed his wife to such great perils, but men are so made that they imagine that to give us babies is the greatest proof of affection they can show us, whereas trust, respect and kindness are a hundred times more likely to produce the affection and mutual understanding which are so much to be desired in married life.

Youth and age are better apart.

17th July, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

There is a great difference between being born in a country and merely knowing its language, or coming to it when one is already grown up and formed. If your niece, the Comtesse de Degenfeldt, loves her husband she will think everything is good and beautiful, because love is a sauce which makes all dishes palatable, and as the prologue says in the play of *Pourceaugnac* :—¹

“ Quand deux cœurs s'aiment bien,
Tout le reste n'est rien.”

¹ The youngest of Madame's half-sisters, the Raugravine Caroline, married the second Duke of Schomberg, and their daughter married her cousin, the Comte de Degenfeldt.

² *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, by Molière.

So, if she loves her husband, she will not regret her country, and everything in the new country where she is going to live will be to her liking. I strongly approve of your decision not to live with her. You will get on better thus, because nothing is truer than the proverb which says that "Age and Youth cannot agree," even when the young people are reasonable. Besides, the servants never live peacefully together, and there are quarrels between them which lead to scenes and coldness between their masters.

Various matters discussed.

24th July, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

People tell me that our dear Germans have deteriorated a great deal, and have renounced the good old qualities of their ancestors and taken to the vices of other nations. I am sorely grieved by that. It becomes Germans less than any other nation to be wicked, false and debauched, because they are not naturally inclined to be so.

The plague is dying down in Provence, but people are not reforming themselves, and, astonishing though it is, they have had to put into hospital at Toulon eighteen people who have been leading a disorderly life in the midst of the ravages of the plague.

It is true certainly that people who have visited Holland consider the Germans dirty, but they have only to come to France in order to think that Germany is clean and pleasant, because there is no place so filthy and disgusting as Paris.

My daughter is, thank God, quite better. There has been a marriage at her court. A certain prince of that house (who is called the Chevalier de Lorraine, and is the son of the Comte de Nassau) has married the second daughter of Madame de Craon, I say that on purpose, because it is quite certain that she is the daughter of her mother. I wish my daughter did not love her husband as much as she does, because the Duke thinks of nothing but heaping benefits on his favourites, the Craons. He never thinks of his own children, which is the cause of great sorrow to my daughter.

When Prince Charles of Hesse imagined that he saw his

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aunt, the Queen, he had no idea that she was dead, and he didn't even know of her illness. He had just received a letter from her. In places where they believe in ghosts, as at the court of Cassel, people are for ever seeing them, but here, where we don't believe in them, they are never heard of.

Two cardinals.

26th July, 1721.

The Archbishop of Cambrai¹ came yesterday to acquaint me with his elevation to cardinalship, so Alberoni has a mate.

An age of ridiculous fashions.

7th August, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I know someone whom I cannot like, but to whom, at the same time, I would do no harm, and that is the newly made Cardinal Dubois. He has poisoned my whole life. God forgive him, but he should be made to suffer for it in this life.

One couldn't, even if one tried for a joke, imagine more ridiculous and tawdry fashions than those that are being worn now by men as well as women. I am scared when I look at them. One would say that the wearers had just come from a lunatic asylum, or at least from a fancy-dress ball. You are quite right in thinking the French fashions of to-day horrible.

Chastisement of servants at Versailles.

16th August, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It is quite usual to love one's children as the Comte de Degenfeldt does; but to love one's wife is quite out of

¹ Dubois.

fashion. There is not a single example of it to be found here; it is a habit which is entirely lost, but what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and the wives treat their husbands in the same way. Happy marriages are still to be found, however, amongst the lower classes. For example, one of my footmen had a wife who was really the ugliest creature you could find in the whole world. She was broader than she was long, and had an enormous mouth, decayed teeth, and bleary eyes, yet the poor man is in despair because she died a week ago. Amongst people of quality, however, I do not know a single example of mutual affection and fidelity.

All Monsieur Gaston's¹ daughters had quick hands and were inclined to beat their servants, both men and women. This is not unexampled in France. The Princesse d'Harcourt, sister of the Duchesse de Brancas, used to live above me at Versailles, and I often used to hear her beating her servants. Sometimes the stick she was using would escape from her hands and roll along the ground. One day she was going to mishandle a chambermaid, who told her to look out because she was not used to being hit and knew how to strike back. The Princess went for her all the same, but the woman was stronger than she was and snatched the cane from her and gave her a rough hiding. After that the Princess never dared to strike any of her servants. The whole court was amused.

First aid to the drowned in Sweden.

11th September, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

In Sweden they maintain that drowned people are not really dead, and when they get them out of the water they put them into a cask in a well-warmed room and roll the cask in every direction until the drowned person has discarded, both above and below, all the water which has entered his body. When he has got rid of it and is well heated up he recovers his senses. None of his relations, however, must be among the helpers or he will not get

¹ Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIII.

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better. If any relative comes into the room, blood will flow from the patient's nose, mouth and ears. People who have seen this happen with their own eyes told me.

It is true, certainly, that it is better to be kind than spiteful; but justice consists just as much in punishing as in rewarding, and it is certain that anyone who does not make himself feared by the French has soon reason to beware of them, because they quickly despise anybody who does not intimidate them. That is why I wish my son was not as good natured as he is.

Madame gives an audience to Cardinal Dubois.

25th September, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

We are all dressed up to-day, because I have a ceremony to perform at three o'clock, namely the reception of that accursed Cardinal Dubois to whom the Pope has sent a biretta. I shall have to salute him, make him sit down and talk to him for a moment. This will not be accomplished without suffering, but sorrow and vexation are my daily bread. Here is my Cardinal arriving and I must break off. The Cardinal begged me to forgive the past and he made me the most charming speech that you ever heard. No one can deny that he has lots of wits and if he were as good a man as he is clever he would leave nothing to be desired.

A magic wand.

29th September, 1721.

The dowager Madame ¹ was very charming by all accounts, and was so slim that when she ran away from Nancy to follow her husband she dressed as a page and carried a torch, but she didn't know how to hold it properly and Monsieur de Beauveau gave her a kick behind, and said,

¹ Widow of Gaston, Duc d'Orléans.

"This new fellow must be drunk ; look how he walks and how he holds his torch." She got away without anyone discovering who she was. When, however, she began to grow old she became feeble, sickly and almost stupid. She formed the habit of retiring from the room as soon as the steward, with his wand, came to announce that a meal was served. One day, when Madame had Monsieur Gaston dining with her, she ran away as usual as soon as the steward came in. The latter stopped and examined his rod at both ends. Monsieur Gaston enquired, "What are you looking for on your rod, Saint Remy ?" and he replied, "I perceive that my rod has the faculty of purging and I was looking to see whether it is made of rhubarb or senna, because whenever it appears before Madame I see that it is a purge."

When Monsieur's marriage was declared, he asked Saint-Remi, "Did you know that I was married to the Princesse de Lorraine ?" "No," replied he, "I knew of course, Monsieur, that you went to bed every night with the Princesse de Lorraine, but I didn't suspect that you had married her."

The Regent's daughter to be Queen of Spain.

2nd October, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I can only write you a few words in haste this morning, my dear Louisa, because I am going to Paris to congratulate my son and his wife on the good news that they have just received, which they sent on to me immediately. The King of Spain has asked the hand of their daughter¹ for his eldest son, the Prince of the Asturias. Mademoiselle de Montpensier has no name yet, and before she goes to Spain the ceremony will be performed. The King and I will name her, then she will receive her first communion and will be confirmed, that is what you might call receiving three sacraments at the same time.

¹ Louise Elisabeth d'Orléans, Mademoiselle de Montpensier. She was only eleven years old at the time of her marriage. She was the Regent's fourth daughter.

Madame receives congratulations on her grand-daughter's betrothal.

4th October, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

People leave me no peace. Every minute visitors come, and I have to get up and make conversation. First of all there came the Comte de Clermont, third brother of Monsieur le Duc, then the Duchesse de Ventadour and her sister the Duchesse de La Ferté. There were twelve of us at table, including the Duc de Chartres, his three sisters and their governess, my two ladies, and Madame de Ségur, who is a daughter of my son, but on the left hand and not legitimatised. There were also the Maréchal de Clerembault and Madame de Pourpris, wife of my Master of the Horse. The Cardinal de Gevres came afterwards and I had to get up to receive him and talk to him. This was nothing to what awaited me after dinner, from two o'clock until half-past six. In my room I found Madame la Princesse with our Duchess of Hanover, the big Princesse de Conti and Mademoiselle de Clermont with all their ladies. When they had all gone there came the little Princesse de Conti with her daughter, Mademoiselle de la Roche-Sur-Yon, Madame du Maine, Madame la Duchesse with Mademoiselle de Charolais and all their ladies. Many other ladies also came who don't belong to the Royal Family, such as the Princesse d'Épinay and Mademoiselle d'Armagnac her niece, the Duchesse de Valentinois, the Princesse de Montauban and, I don't know how many more. There were innumerable duchesses, the Maréchales de Noailles and de Boufflers, the Duchesses de Lesdiguières, de Nevers, d'Humières, de Grammont, de Roquelaure, de Viliars; the Duchesse d'Orléans also came. The ladies who do not sit down were numerous, and I am sure I have forgotten many *tabourets*. It was so hot in my room that I would have felt ill if I had not gone into my wardrobe from time to time to get my breath; but what troubled me most was my knees, through having to get up and bow. I really thought I was going to be ill.

I have beside me an abbot whom I have often called a rogue. He is splitting my head so with his chattering that

I don't know what I am saying. From that you can guess that I mean my Abbé de Saint-Albin, who will soon be Bishop of Laon and duke and peer of France. That will please me greatly, because I have been fonder of this poor boy from his earliest days than of all his sisters, and I am sure that, of all my son's children, legitimate and illegitimate, he is the one who loves me best.

An apt retort.

7th October, 1721.

The Duc de Saxe-Weimar, of whom I have already spoken to you, made some smart retorts. One day a young Frenchman asked him, "How did you manage to lose the battle?" The duke replied serenely, "I thought I was going to win it and I lost it." Then he turned round and asked, "Who is the fool who asked me that question?"

Louis XIV. catches a rascal.

10th October, 1721.

I have seen the King strike only two people and they richly deserved it. The first was a footman who refused to allow the King to enter the garden during a party he was giving, and the King gave him two good blows. The other was a thief whom the King saw feeling in Monsieur de Villars pocket. The King was on horseback, and he made for the thief and beat him soundly with his cane. The thief began to shout, "Help, help, I am being murdered!" That made us all laugh, including the King. He had the rascal arrested and made him give back the purse, but he did not order him to be hanged. . . . People here were greatly amused at the Princesse de Schomberg because she used to ask the King hundreds of questions, which is not customary here. The King did not like to be spoken to first, but he never laughed at anyone to their face. . . .

The Dauphiness's informal upbringing.

18th October, 1721.

It is not to be wondered at that the Dauphiness was a flirt when she was Duchesse de Bourgogne. To begin with, one of the Maintenon's maxims was that there is no harm in a flirtation, but a real love affair is a sin. In the second place she was never particular about the Duchesse de Bourgogne's behaving in a manner suitable to her rank, and she was often quite alone in her residence without her attendants. She would take one of the young ladies by the arm and go about without her grooms, lady-in-waiting, or maids of honour. At Marly and Versailles she used to go on foot and uncorseted, and would enter the chapel and sit amongst the chambermaids. In Madame de Maintenon's room no ranks were observed and everyone used to sit down. This was done on purpose so that her own rank would not be perceived. At Marly the Dauphiness used to wander about the gardens at night until three or four o'clock in the morning accompanied by her young friends. The King never heard a word about these nocturnal outings. The Maintenon woman, moreover, forbade the Duchesse de Lude to say one word about it to the Duchesse de Bourgogne, for fear of angering her, because if the Duchess became dull she would no longer be able to amuse the King. She threatened that she would never forgive anyone who dared to give away the Dauphiness to the King, for which reason no one had the courage to say anything to the King about the matter. He never heard of it, in fact, although the whole court and the courts of other countries knew all about it. The Dauphiness used to have herself dragged along the ground by lackeys who pulled her by her feet, and they used to say to each other, "Let us be off soon to amuse ourselves with the Duchesse de Bourgogne," as she still was then.

A Polish Princess.

30th October, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The Princess Ragotzi speaks politely and sensibly. I know all about her life and I must confess that I am a little bit ashamed of her, because everyone here knows her story. This morning I made my son laugh by telling him that he must not stay alone with her, because she would be quite capable of trying to rape him. They say that she would have liked to have done so with the Czar.

1st November, 1721.

The Grand-Duchesse¹ says that when they took Monsieur le Prince and his brother, the Prince de Conti, to the Bastille during the regency of the Queen-mother, they asked what books they would like to amuse themselves with. The Prince de Conti asked for the *Imitation of Jesus*, while the Prince de Condé requested the *Imitation of the Duke of Beaufort*, who had just escaped from the Bastille, but I expect, says the Grand-Duchess, that the Princess of Modena would ask for the *Imitation of the Grand-Duchesse*.

The Regent keeps no Court.

22nd November, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

What you say about the present time and my position these days shows me quite plainly that you do not know either this court or this country. Would to God that the late King were still alive, because I had more pleasure and happiness in one day then than I have had during the six years of my son's regency. There was a real court then and not this middle class life to which I cannot get

¹ The Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, daughter of Gaston, Duke of Orleans, left her husband and returned to Italy. The Princess of Modena, granddaughter of Madame, was not happy with her Italian husband either.



Louis Quinze

After Rigaud.

LOUIS XV. IN HIS CORONATION ROBES.

accustomed, I, who was brought up at a court, and have spent all my life at one. In the King's days my son was with me all day long, but now I see him barely one hour a month. At Paris, where we share an ante-chamber, I often go three days without a glimpse of him. His regency brings me only fear and anxiety, as I am always in terror lest he should be assassinated on account of the dreadful hatred people bear him. He takes no care of himself in his love affairs and goes out whole nights, which he could not do in the King's days. For that reason also I am afraid that his health, too, is in great danger.

A famous robber.

29th November, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

As I came out of chapel I met the Comte de Hoim and the Chevalier de Shaub, who told me about Cartouche's having been broken on the wheel yesterday. That kept me a long time.

People of small stature always dance better than tall people. No one has ever seen a very tall person dance perfectly except perhaps the big Princesse de Conti, but then no one in the world danced as well as she did. I have seen many stout people who were good dancers. The Duc de Sully is very stout and he dances very well and so does my son.

The late King's legitimatised sons.

5th December, 1721.

My son cannot and will not believe that the Duc du Maine is the King's son. He has always been treacherous and has done everybody bad turns and he is despised as the arch-tell-tale. That little toad, his wife, is much more violent than he because he is very cowardly and fear often holds him back, but his wife mixes heroics with her comedies.

I am quite sure that the Comte de Toulouse is the King's son, but I have always thought that the Duc du Maine was the son of Terme, who was an untrustworthy rogue, and the greatest tell-tale imaginable. The old bawd persuaded the King that the Duc du Maine was all virtue and piety, and when he used to say evil of people she would maintain that it was for their good, that the King might correct them, so the King thought everything that the Duke did was admirable and looked upon him as a saint, which view his confessor, Père Le Tellier, encouraged in order to please the old woman. The late Chancellor, Monsieur Voisin, acting on the old woman's orders, also used to praise the Duke to the King.

Mademoiselle de Montpensier departs for Spain.

6th December, 1721, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

It cannot be said that Mademoiselle de Montpensier is ugly, as she has beautiful eyes and fine white skin. Her nose is well made although a little thin, and her mouth is very small. In spite of all this, however, she is the most disagreeable person I have ever seen. In everything she does, be it speaking, eating or drinking, she is unbearable. She never shed a tear when she left us, and would hardly even say good-bye. I have seen two of my relations, one after the other, become queens of Spain, and now my granddaughter. The one of whom I was fondest was my stepdaughter. I had the most sincere affection for her, as if she had been my sister, because she could not have been my daughter since I was only nine years older than she. I was still quite a child when I came to France, and we used to play together with Charles-Louis and the little Prince d'Eisenach, and we often made such a noise that you couldn't have heard a thunderbolt falling.

If there had been any chance of making the Spanish heir marry an arch-duchess, and if the Comte de Mansfeld were still alive, I wouldn't give a hair for the life of the Princess

of the Asturias, because he poisoned our poor dear queen as surely as I am writing to you. They aren't scrupulous in that respect in the Imperial council, and they send people to the other world without the Emperor's knowledge.¹

¹ Saint-Simon writes of "the facility of the House of Austria in ridding itself by poison of those who stand in its way."

CHAPTER XIV

1722.

Death of Princess Ragotzi.

21st February, 1722, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

Large, stout, and hearty-looking people do not live any longer than other folk, as we see by the poor Princesse de Ragotzi. On Sunday she was hale and hearty-looking, but on Monday after she had had a tooth taken out, she developed an abscess in her mouth and became feverish. They bled her twice from the arm and once from the foot, and she felt better for a few moments after the bleeding, but later she said, "I feel worse," and then gave up the ghost. They buried her yesterday at her convent. Her servants told me a really extraordinary story about her. When she was in Warsaw she dreamt one night that a stranger came to speak to her in a little room that she had never seen before. He offered her a glass and told her to drink, but she was not at all thirsty, and refused. He insisted and told her that it was the last drink she would ever have, and at that point she woke up. She always remembered this dream, and when she came here she stayed at first at an hotel, where, finding herself ill, she asked for a doctor. They brought to see her Doctor Helvetius, who is one of the King's doctors. His father is Dutch and he is a very clever and highly respected man. As soon as she saw him she showed signs of great distress, and Comte Schlieben asked what the reason was. She replied that Doctor Helvetius reproduced feature for feature before her eyes the man she had seen in her dream at Warsaw. Then she began to laugh and said, "I shall not die of this illness because this room is not the one I saw at Warsaw." When, however, she came to the convent at Chaillot and

LETTERS OF MADAME

saw the room they had already prepared for her, she said to her servants, "I shall never leave here alive, because this is the room I saw in my dream in Poland, in which I drank for the last time." And thus it has happened. It is really very strange, but it seems to me that such things happen to members of the House of Hesse more often than to any other people. What is the reason of it? God knows. We people of the Palatinate are quite different, we never either see ghosts nor dream dreams.

Private talks with King Louis.

3rd March, 1722.

The old woman alienated the King from me as much as she could, and she contrived so that none of the members of the royal family could enter into the King's cabinet. My request to be allowed to do so was never formally refused, but it was only granted after the death of the Dauphin and the Dauphiness. The latter used to accompany the King into places where I did not, and where I should not have wished to go, because she used to go with him when he was seated on the closet, and so did the old woman too, in order that she might always have this opportunity of speaking to him in secret.

A baby bride.

26th March, 1722, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am sure that you couldn't find in the whole world a more charming and beautiful child than our pretty *infanta*,¹ and she makes observations that would be creditable to a person of thirty years. "They say that when one dies

¹ The little *Infanta* was only three and a half years old when she came to France to be betrothed to Louis XV.

at my age one is saved and goes straight to Heaven. I should be very happy, therefore, if the good God would take me." I am afraid she is too intelligent and will not live long. She has the nicest manners and has taken a great fancy to me. In her ante-chamber she runs to meet me with wide open arms and embraces me lovingly. . . . Things happen here which make me think that Solomon was wrong when he said that there is nothing new under the sun. As an example, Madame de Polignac has told her husband, "I am with child, but not by you, as you know very well. I warn you, however, not to make a fuss about it, because if you go to law, you will lose your case, since you know very well what the law is in this country. Every child born in wedlock belongs to the husband, so this child is yours; besides, I make you a present of it." I don't think there has ever been the like of that before.

The young Princesse de Conti brings a suit against her husband.

16th April, 1722, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The young people these days have only two objects in life, vice and personal gain, and the eagerness with which they are always seeking for money, by no matter what means, makes them preoccupied and disagreeable. To be pleasant, one must have a heart free from care and be able to amuse oneself in honest company, but people are very far from that these days.

There is no doubt that we all have our own troubles and sorrows, and yesterday I saw two people in deep affliction for whom I am really sorry, I mean Madame la Princesse and her granddaughter, the young Princesse de Conti, who has begun a suit against her husband. He is absolutely determined to see her again and she, on her part, has undergone such terrible treatment that she is equally determined to separate from him by any means. This is making a dreadful scandal.

LETTERS OF MADAME

The monks' revenge on Madame.

20th April, 1722.

The monks of the convent at Ibourg wanted to be revenged on me because I had all unwittingly given them away, by telling the abbot that they had been fishing in the pond underneath my window, which had been forbidden by the abbot. They planned to pour out white wine for me instead of water. I kept on saying, "I don't know what is the matter with this water, but the more I put into my wine the stronger it becomes." The monks only said, "Our wine is very good." When we got up from the table I wanted to go into the garden, and if they had not prevented me from doing so I should have fallen into the pond. I threw myself on the ground and went fast asleep. They took me into my room and laid me on the bed, and I only woke up at nine o'clock that evening. It was Good Friday. I remembered all that had happened, and complained to the abbot about what the monks had done to me, and they were put in prison. People often teased me about that Good Friday.

King Louis dislikes Protestants.

8th May, 1722.

They had inspired the King with such a fear of Hell that he believed that anyone who had not been taught by the Jesuits was damned, and he feared that he, too, would be damned if he associated with them. When they wished to ruin anyone they had only to say, *He is a Huguenot or Jansenist*, and the deed was done. My son wanted to take into his service a gentleman whose mother was an acknowledged Jansenist, and the Jesuits, wishing to make trouble for my son with the King, told him that the Prince wanted to take a Jansenist into his service. The King sent for my son and said to him, "Come, come, nephew. What are you thinking about to take a Jansenist into your service?" "I have no such intention," said my son. The King replied,

"You are taking so and so whose mother is one." My son began to laugh and said, "I can assure your Majesty that he is certainly not a Jansenist. On the contrary, it is more to be feared that he doesn't believe in God at all." "Oh," said the King, "if that is all that is the matter, and you assure me that he is not a Jansenist you can have him."

Sceptical Paris.

16th May, 1722, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I thank you very much for praying for me. I have nothing more to desire for my happiness in this world, and provided that God will look after my children I am content, but I greatly need intercessions for my happiness in the other world, and for my son. The only boon that I crave of God is that He will convert him. I don't think that there are in Paris amongst the ecclesiastics as well as amongst laymen a hundred people who have a real Christian faith or who even believe in Our Saviour. It makes me shudder.

Madame's position after her husband's death.

21st May, 1722.

After Monsieur's death, the King sent to ask me where I wished to go, whether to a convent at Paris, or to Maubuisson or elsewhere. I replied that since I had the honour to belong to the Royal Family, I could have no abode except where the King was, and that I should like to go straight away to Versailles. This pleased the King and he came to see me. He hurt me a little, however, by saying that he had sent to ask me where I wished to retire, because he didn't think that I should like to stay in the same place as himself. I said that I didn't know who could have given His Majesty such a wrong idea of me, and that I had more respect and attachment for His Majesty than any of those who had falsely accused me. Then the King sent everyone away and we had a thorough explanation, during which the King

accused me of hating Madame de Maintenon. I said that it was true that I hated her, but only because of my affection for him, and because she did me harm with His Majesty, and I added that if he desired me to become reconciled with her, I was ready to do so. The good lady had not foreseen that or she would not have allowed the King to come near me. He was so faithful that he remained my friend to his last moment. He sent for the old woman and said to her, "Madame wishes to be reconciled with you." Then he made us embrace, and thus closed the matter. Afterwards he desired her to behave well to me, which she did, indeed, to all outward appearance, but in underhand ways she played me all sorts of tricks. I didn't object to paying a visit to Montargis, but I did not want it to look as if I were in disgrace, and as if I had done something dreadful for which they were expelling me from the Court. Besides, I was afraid that if I were two days' journey from here they would let me die of hunger, which I had no intention of doing. I much preferred making my peace with the King. As for retiring into a convent, I didn't think that would suit me at all, though it was just what the old woman would have liked. The castle of Montargis is my dower-house. There is no residence at Orleans. Saint-Cloud is not an appanage, but is a property which the late Monsieur bought with his own money. My dowry is worth nothing, and everything I have to live on comes from my son. At the beginning of my widowhood they left me without paying me anything, until at last they owed me three hundred thousand francs, which were only paid to me after the King's death, so what would things have been like if I had chosen to retire to Montargis?

A brutal thief.

4th June, 1722, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The beggars who haunt the countryside are usually thorough rascals. A few years ago one of them was killed who used to follow the Court mounted on a donkey. He was a murderer. He used to pretend to have fallen off his ass and would beseech people, for mercy's sake, to come and

help him up. He carried a knife and a whistle, and if anyone came to his rescue in a lonely spot he would cut their throat with his knife and blow the whistle to call his companions to strip the poor victims.

Did Anne of Austria marry Cardinal Mazarin?

2nd July, 1722.

The Queen-Mother¹ was quite happy about Cardinal Mazarin. He was not a priest so he was quite able to marry. All the circumstances are now known and the secret passage that he took every night to go to her is still at the Palais-Royal.

The robbers' reprisals.

6th August, 1722, Saint-Cloud.

We hear of nothing but murders and thefts, and in a chapel they found placards fixed on the walls and even on the altar itself, announcing that if they did not stop putting people on the wheel and hanging them Paris would be burnt to the uttermost corner.

An old official has to be replaced.

13th August, 1722.

I must tell you that the old Maréchal de Villeroi took it into his head a few days ago that my son must not speak to the King in private. This made my son so angry that he had him arrested and taken to Villeroi. The Duc d'Escars is governor to the King in the marshal's place.

¹ Anne of Austria.

LETTERS OF MADAME

Madame longs for the home of her childhood.

30th August, 1722.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

There is no better air in the world than that of Heidelberg, especially that of the castle where I lived. Nothing purer could be found. No one can understand better than I how you must have felt, my dear Louisa, when you were at Heidelberg. I can never think of it without the keenest emotion, but I will not speak of it to-night, because it makes me too sad and prevents me from sleeping.

Madame is old and resigned.

29th September, 1722.

To MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

I do what my doctor tells me to, in order to be left in peace, and I accept at the hands of God, the All-powerful, whatever He ordains for me. I am entirely resigned to His will.

Madame prepares for a journey.

3rd October, 1722.

To MONSIEUR DE HARLING.

There has been no change in my affairs since I wrote to you the day before yesterday. All will happen as God ordains, so I am preparing for my journey to Rheims¹ and time will show what the result will be. I enclose a letter from your nephew, and I assure you that in whatever state I find myself I shall remain always your true friend.

Madame's return from Rheims in a feeble state.

5th November, 1722, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I returned hither the day before yesterday, but in a sad state. During my journey I received five of your dear letters

¹ For the Coronation of Louis XV.

and I thank you sincerely for them because they gave me the greatest pleasure, but I could not reply to them, as much on account of my feeble state as because of the continual turmoil in which I was living. My time was fully occupied with ceremonies, with my children, with whom I was continually surrounded, and by crowds of distinguished folk, princes, dukes, cardinals, archbishops and bishops who came to see me. I don't think anything more magnificent than the King's coronation could possibly be imagined, and if God leaves me my health for a little longer I will write a description of it for you. My daughter was upset when she saw me, because she had hardly believed that I was ill and thought that I was only a little tired, but when she saw me at Rheims she was so shocked that the tears came into her eyes. I am very sorry for her. Her children are fine but I am afraid that the eldest is going to be a giant. He is only fifteen years old and his height is already remarkable. The other four are neither tall nor short. The youngest one, Charles, is very funny. He teases his sisters and plays a great many amusing pranks. One could use our father's expression with regard to him and say that his tongue will never grow mouldy in his mouth. In my opinion, the most handsome of the three boys is the second. As for the girls, the youngest is indisputably the prettier, but the elder has such a nice expression that no one could call her ugly. I would like very much to go on chatting with you, but am too feeble.

The Regent's reformation.

12th November, 1722, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

The day after to-morrow I hope to send you the account of the coronation. I have no news to tell except that I have heard something which gives me the greatest joy, and that is that my son has finished with his mistresses because he thinks that he cannot continue to lead the sort of life that would be a bad example for the King, and would be a just cause of reproach. May God keep him in his good resolu-

LETTERS OF MADAME

tions and arrange everything for his good.¹ That is my sole worry, beyond that I have no fear of what God has in store for me.

Madame awaits the approach of death.

21st November, 1722.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

I am sinking from hour to hour and I suffer day and night and nothing they can do for me gives me any relief. I have need of the patience God grants me, and it would be a great mercy if He would deliver me from my suffering. Do not therefore sorrow if you lose me, because it would be a happy release for me.

A very old friend of Madame's is ill.

26th November, 1722, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

As well as my illness I have another sorrow which strikes me to the heart. The poor old Maréchale de Clérembault is very ill.

Madame's last letter.

29th November, 1722, Paris.

To the RAUGRAVINE LOUISA.

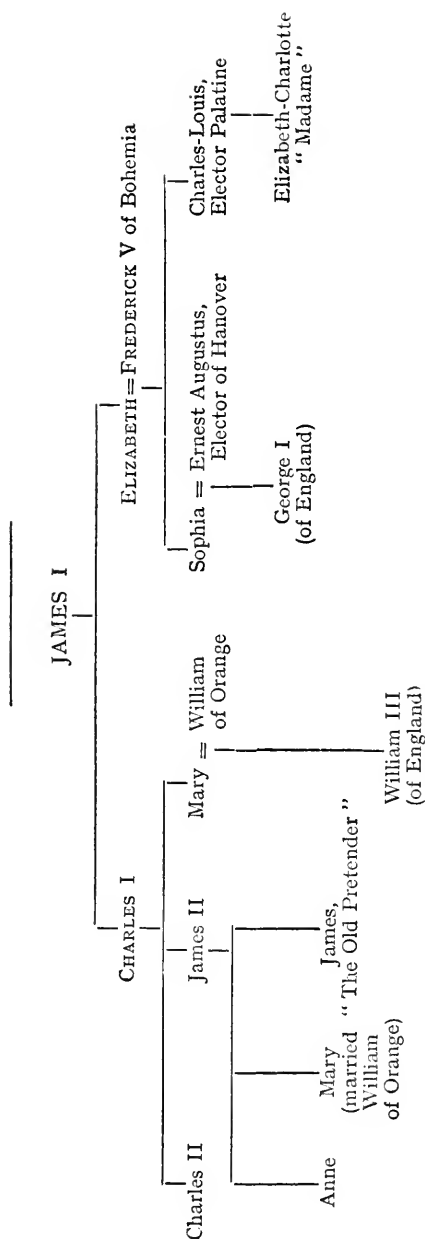
To-day you will only receive a very short letter. I am worse than I have ever been and I never closed my eyes last night. Yesterday morning we lost the dear Maréchale, She had no crisis, but her life simply ebbed away. Her death causes me real sorrow because she was a very good and capable woman. She was very learned too, but never let it be too obvious. They say that she has chosen as her heir

¹ The Regent, feeling that the example of his open debauchery was a bad example for the young king, pensioned off his mistresses but otherwise made no great change in his life. He died the following year.

the son of her eldest brother. There is nothing surprising in the death of a person who is eighty-eight years old, but it must always be painful to lose a friend with whom one has spent fifty-one years. I must stop now, however, my dear Louisa, because I am in too great pain to write more to-day. If you saw in what a pitiful state I am you would understand how much I long to finish with it all.¹

¹ Madame died nine days later, and her body was taken, as she would have wished, without pomp to Saint-Denis. In the *Journal de Marais* we read an account of her last illness. "Madame is very ill and all hope has been given up. Experienced doctors come from everywhere and make her fine promises, but she tells them all that they are quacks, and that she is dying. She is full of courage and spirit. The journey to Rheims did not alarm her as she said that one could die just as well anywhere. To her son she said: 'Why are you weeping? Death is inevitable, isn't it?' To a lady of her Court who asked leave to kiss her hand she said: 'You may embrace me; I am going where all are equal.' We are losing a good princess, of whom there are not many."

GENEALOGICAL TABLE, SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP OF MADAME TO
THE ROYAL HOUSE OF ENGLAND.



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THE following is a complete list, so far as can be ascertained, of the letters of Madame that have been published, in one form or another, up to the present. The list is arranged under the names of the persons to whom the letters were addressed :—

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- Brunswick, Augustus William, Duke of ; letters written between 1716 and 1718. H. von Sybel's *Historischer Zeitschrift*, 1889. Includes also one letter to Anton Ulrich, Duke of Brunswick, dated 1714.
- Brunswick, Anton Ulrich, Duke of Brunswick ; letters published by the Libraire Maradan, Paris, 1788 ; and also *Anecdotes vom französischen Hofe*, etc., Strassburg, 1789.
- Caroline of Anspach, Princess of Wales ; letters published with those of the Duke of Brunswick (see above) in 1788 and 1789.
- Clement XI, Pope ; one letter, dated 26th June, 1701, is included in the *Mannheimer Geschichts Blättern*, 1910, No. 10
- Chartres, Duc de ; letters included in the *Vie de l'Abbé Dubois*, by Seilhac.
- Dubois, the Abbé ; letters included in his *Life*, by Seilhac (see above).
- Haxthausen, Anna Juliana and Christian August of ; letters in the *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, published by the Badischen Historischen Kommission, 1913 (P. Zimmermann).
- John William, Elector Palatine ; letters included in the *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, Freiburg, 1889 (von Weech).
- Leibnitz, Gottfried Wilhelm ; letters 1715-1716, appeared in the *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Niedersachsen*, 1884, Hanover (Bodemann).
- Mascara, the Abbé ; one letter published in *Philippe V et la Cour d'Espagne*, Baudrillart. Paris, 1890.

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- Spain, Philip V, King of Spain. In Baudrillart's *Philippe V et la Cour d'Espagne* (see above).
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- Lorraine; letters to the Court of Lorraine appear in the *Jahrbuch für Lothringische Geschichte*, volume 19.
- Maintenon, Madame de; two letters are included in Brunet's collection in 1853 (see Introduction, iv.).
- Modena; letters to the Courts of Modena, Stockholm, and Turin are given in the *Historischen Vierteljahrsschrift*, 1908.
- Nassau-Saarbrücken, William Henry, Count of; *Mannheimer Geschichts Blättern*, 1910, No. 10, p. 209-212. This publication also includes one letter to the Elector Palatine, Charles Philip, and one to Herzog von Fornary.
- Hanover, Electress Sophia of; the only letters published are contained in Vol. V of Ranke's *Histoire de France aux XIV-XVII Siècles*, and were translated into French by Rolland.
- Harling, Madame de; letters to her appear in the second edition of Brunet's collection, 1855 (see Introduction, iv.).

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